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RODERICK MacEACHEN

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CONTENTS.

Volume Two.

Chapter	Page
I—The Prophecies Fulfilled in Christ	1
II—The Incarnation	19
III—Jesus Christ	28
IV—Jesus the Messias Rejected	49
V—The Divinity of Christ	62
VI—Christ Risen	81
VII—The Mission of Christ	92
VIII—Christ's Kingdom upon Earth	102
IX—The Primacy of St. Peter	116
X—The Apostolic Succession	135
XI—The Infallibility of the Church	146
XII—The Unity of the Church	156
XIII—Holiness of the Church	171
XIV—Universality of the Church	183
XV—The Perpetuity of the Church	193
XVI—Salvation in the Church Alone	208

DOGMATIC SERIES.

Vol. II.

CHAPTER I.

The Prophecies Fulfilled in Christ.

FOUR thousand years the world had waited for the promised Redeemer. Every detail of His birth and His life had been foretold hundreds of years before His coming. He was to be born of a Virgin. This the Prophet Isaias had foretold 750 years before His coming: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son and his name shall be called Emmanuel."[1]

The Gospel relates the event that followed: "The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee,

[1] Isaias vii, 14.

called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.

"And the angel said to her: Hail, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women. . . . Thou hast found grace with God.

"Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High . . . of his kingdom there shall be no end. . . .

The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."[2] "He shall save his people from their sins."[3]

[2] St. Luke i, 26-35.
[3] St. Matthew i, 21.

Fifteen hundred years before, Moses had foretold that the Redeemer would be a descendant of Abraham. "Saith the Lord (to Abraham): I will bless thee and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of Heaven and as the sand that is by the seashore. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."[4]

Both Mary and Joseph belonged to the house of David. St. Matthew describes the genealogy of Christ. He gives the ancestors of Joseph. Genealogies were generally traced by the male descendents. "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham."[5]

Seven hundred and forty years before His birth, the prophet Micheas had foretold that Christ would be born in Bethlehem. "And thou, Bethlehem, Ephrata, art a little one among

[4] Genesis xxii, 16-18.
[5] St. Matthew i, 1.

the thousands of Juda; out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel: and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity."[6]

The Gospel says: "And Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife. . . . And it came to pass that when they were there, her days were accomplished. . . . And she brought forth her first-born son, and laid him in a manger."[7]

Once more an angel of the Lord appears. It was to some poor shepherds who were watching their flocks near the city. "I bring you tidings of great Joy," said the angel, "this day is born

[6] Michieas v, 2.
[7] St. Luke ii, 4-7.

to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David."[8]

"When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold therefore there came wise men from the East . . . they found the child with Mary his Mother, and falling down they adored him, and opening their treasures they offered him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh."[9]

Seven centuries before this the Prophet Isaias had said: "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Madian and Epha; all they from Saba shall come, bringing gold and frankincense: showing forth praise to the Lord."[10]

When Herod sought the life of the child Jesus, an angel appeared to

[8] St. Luke ii, 10-11.
[9] St. Matthew ii, 1-11.
[10] Isaias lx, 6.

Joseph and said: "Arise and take the child and his mother and fly into Egypt."[11]

"But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying: Arise, take the child and his mother and go into the land of Israel."[12]

This is a fulfilment of the words uttered by the prophet Osee, seven hundred and fifty years before: "I called my son out of Egypt."[13]

After Joseph had departed for Egypt, "Herod perceiving that he was deluded . . . was exceeding angry, and sending killed all the men children that were in Bethlehem."[14]

Then took place what the prophet Jeremias had described six centuries before: "A voice was heard on high of lamentations, of mourning and weep-

[11] St. Matthew ii, 14.
[12] St. Matthew ii, 19, 20.
[13] Osee xi, 1.
[14] St. Matthew ii, 16.

ing, of Rachael weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted for them, because they are not."[15]

"And coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets: That he shall be called a Nazarene."[16]

Nearly thirty years had elapsed since the birth of Christ. Then came John; preaching in the desert of Judea, and saying: "Do penance; for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. . . . A voice of one crying out in the desert, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight his paths."[17] Thus were fulfilled the words of the Prophet Malachias: "Behold, I send my angel (my messenger), and he shall prepare the way before my face."[18] Then the words of Isaias: "The voice of one

[15] Jeremias xxxi, 15.
[16] St. Matthew ii, 23.
[17] St. Matthew iii, 1-3.
[18] Malachias iii, 1.

crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God."[19]

Jesus went about preaching and teaching amongst the people. He spoke to them in parables, as David had sung of Him a thousand years before: "I will open my mouth in parables."[20]

"A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign," said Jesus, "and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet."[21] The sign was this: "The Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonas: and Jonas was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."[22] This was written eight hundred and fifty years before Christ. It was thus Christ foretold that He would lie three days in the tomb and then rise from the dead.

[19] Isaias xl, 3.
[20] Psalm lxxvii, 2.
[21] St. Matthew xvi, 4.
[22] Jonas ii, 1.

A short time before His passion, Jesus, seated upon an ass, came in triumph to Jerusalem. "A great multitude . . . took branches of palm trees and went forth to meet him, and cried: Hosanna; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, the king of Israel. And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it."[23]

It was the Prophet Zacharias who had described this scene five hundred years before: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold, thy king will come to thee, the just and saviour; he is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."[24]

At supper the night before His passion, Jesus said to His disciples: "Amen, I say to you, that one of you is about to betray me."[25] The Psalm-

[23] St. John xii, 12-14.
[24] Zacharias ix, 9.
[25] St. Matthew xxvi, 21.

ist had told it long before: "Even the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, hath greatly supplanted me."[26]

Then Judas betrayed his master for thirty pieces of silver, with which they afterwards bought the potter's field. "Then Judas, who betrayed Him, brought back the thirty pieces of silver . . . saying, I have sinned in betraying innocent blood . . . after they had consulted together, they bought the potter's field, to be the burying place for strangers."[27]

The Prophet Zacharias had already recorded the same sad event: "If it be good in your eyes, bring hither my wages . . . and they weighed for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me: Cast it into the

[26] Psalms xl, 10.
[27] St. Matthew xxvii, 3-7.

statuary (pottery) a handsome price that I was prized at by them."[28]

Christ was nailed to a cross. "And with Him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left."[29] "He was reputed with the wicked," says the prophet Isaias: "And he hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors."[30] Christ indeed prayed for His transgressors. "And Jesus said: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[31]

As Jesus hung on the cross: "They, putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to his mouth."[32] The Psalmist had long since said: "And they gave me gall for my food, and

[28] Zacharias xi, 12-13.
[29] St. Mark xv, 27.
[30] Isaias liii, 12.
[31] St. Luke xxiii, 34.
[32] St. John xix, 29.

in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."[33]

"After they were come to Jesus," says the Evangelist, "when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side . . . that the Scripture might be fulfilled: 'You shall not break a bone of him;'[34] and also, 'They shall look on him whom they have pierced.'[35]"[36]

The time of Christ's coming was foretold by the prophet Daniel. In the year 588 before Christ, the kingdom of David was destroyed and the Israelites were taken captive into Babylon.

From among the chieftains, God chose Daniel for His prophet. Daniel describes the Kingdom of Christ in prophetic vision: "The God of Heaven

[33] Psalm lxviii, 22.
[34] Exodus xii, 46, and Numbers ix, 12.
[35] Zacharias xii, 10.
[36] St. John xix, 33-37.

shall set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, and his kingdom shall not be delivered up to another people."[37]

"And he gave him power, and glory, and a kingdom; and all peoples, tribes and tongues shall serve him; his power is an everlasting power that shall not be taken away; and his kingdom that shall not be destroyed."[38]

Daniel besought God that He might hasten the time of salvation. Then the Archangel Gabriel appeared to him and made known to him the time when the Messias would come. "As I was yet speaking in prayer," he says, "behold the man Gabriel whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, flying swiftly, touched me at the time of the evening sacrifice, and he instructed me, and spoke to me and said: O Daniel, I am now come forth to

[37] Daniel ii, 44.
[38] Daniel vii, 14.

teach thee, and that thou mightest understand.

"From the beginning of thy prayers the word came forth; and I am come to shew it to thee, because thou art a man of desires; therefore do thou mark the word and understand the vision.

"Seventy weeks are shortened upon thy people, and upon the holy city, that transgression may be finished, and sin may have an end, and iniquity may be abolished; and everlasting justice may be brought; and vision and prophecy may be fulfilled; and the saint of saints may be anointed.

"Know thou, therefore, and take notice: that from the going forth of the word to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ, the Prince, there shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks; and the street shall be built again, and the walls in straightness of times.

"And after sixty-two weeks Christ

shall be slain; and the people that shall deny him shall not be his. And a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation.

"And he shall confirm the covenant with many, in one week: and in the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail: and there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation: and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation, and to the end."[39]

The Archangel Gabriel clearly speaks of the prophecies that had been made concerning salvation. He refers to the taking away of sin, the abrogation of the Old Dispensation and the institution of the New Dispensation. He describes these events as happening when "Christ the Prince shall come."

[39] Daniel ix, 21-27.

The "seventy weeks" are periods of seven years each. The Hebrew word "shabua" which is here translated "week" may mean any cycle of seven periods. According to usage, it may mean seven days or it may mean seven years.

The "seventy weeks" are divided into three periods. The first period of "seven weeks" would be forty-nine years. The second period of "sixty-two weeks" would be four hundred and thirty-four years. The third period of "one week" would be seven years. The entire period of time would thus be four hundred and ninety years.

Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, began to reign in the year 474 B. C. In the twentieth year of his reign, or in the year 454, he gave forth an edict to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. "And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain."

After the first period of forty-nine years and the second period of four hundred and thirty-four years and "in the half of the week" the death of Christ should take place.

This is four hundred and ninety-six and a half years after the edict went forth to build the city. This brings the time up to the middle of the thirty-third year of Christ's life. The ancient sacrifices were to cease in the temple at the death of Christ: "And in the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail."

During that whole period of seven years, about the middle of which Christ was slain, many believed in the teaching of Christ: "And he shall confirm the covenant with many." Christ Himself went about teaching and preaching for three years. Then many thousands were converted by the Apostles in the first three or four years after the death of Christ.

In the year 70 A. D. the Roman Emperor Titus destroyed the temple. Henceforth it is to remain in ruin forever. Thus began that "desolation (which) shall continue even to the consummation, and to the end."

CHAPTER II.

The Incarnation.

NONE other than a God-man could atone for man's sin. The Redeemer, if He possessed but the divine nature, could not suffer in man's stead. If He possessed mere human nature, He could not provide the infinite satisfaction that was required for man's sin.

To redeem us from sin, God the Son became man. He took upon Himself our human nature. He "was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary."[1] He is called Jesus Christ. He is our Lord, our Saviour, our Redeemer. As God, Christ existed from all eternity. As

[1] The Apostles' Creed.

man, He was born more than nineteen hundred years ago in Bethlehem.

The narrative of His birth is the most sublime in history. Mary, with her chaste spouse, Joseph, had journeyed to the city of David. They could find no room at the inns. So they betook themselves to a stable. There, under a shelter intended for dumb brutes, the Saviour of the world was born. An angel announces His birth to some poor shepherds in the valleys.

"The poor, the little ones, the sons of toil, were the first invited to the crib, in the person of the shepherds. They were the objects of special predilection on the part of the God-man. An angel was sent to them to announce the great event: 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. . . . This day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you. You

shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.'[2]

"How great must have been their surprise, their astonishment, their bewilderment. The great Redeemer had come at last! The Messias promised to their fathers has appeared, but, O God! what strange signs are those of His coming—a cave, a manger, an infant wrapped in swaddling bands! Is that the Saviour announced by the prophets—the Emmanuel, the Mighty God, the Angel of the Covenant, the Wonderful, the Father of Eternity, the Dominator Who will subject to His power all the nations of the earth, and Who will reign from sea to sea, and from the river Jordan even to the ends of the world?

"What a reversal of all their dreams and of all their hopes!

"After the shepherds, the Magi were invited to the crib. After the poor,

[2] St. Luke ii, 10-11.

the rich; after the humble, the wise and learned; after the little ones, the powerful and the great, because Christ came to save and redeem the whole race."[3]

The Son of God did not need the passing splendor of this world. He was born as the lowliest of earth. He chose this humble condition because He came to save all. The great ones of earth may easily enter Bethlehem's stable. But the poor and the lowly might have feared to enter had He chosen to be born in a magnificent palace.

In Christ, divine and human nature are united. He possesses both the nature of God and the nature of man. It is a union of two natures in one single person. Christ is at the same time both God and man.

The Incarnation is a fundamental

[3] The Son of Man, pages 62, 63; Rev. Placid Huault, S. M., Benziger Press, 1910.

dogma of Faith. The Incarnation "more than any other divine work, transcends the power of reason," says St. Thomas. "Nothing more marvelous can be conceived as being done by God than that the true God, the Son of God, should become true man. And since it is the most wonderful of all works, it follows that all other wondrous works have for their object to establish faith in this."[4]

Without the aid of Divine Revelation the human mind could not even know the possibility of the Incarnation. Some have attempted to prove the doctrine of the Incarnation by reason alone. Others have striven to show that it is contrary to reason. Both attempts have failed.

When the Son of God became man, His divine nature underwent no change. His divine nature was united in one person to human nature. This union

[4] St. Thomas, Summa contra Gentiles, Liber 4, c. 27.

of natures is called the hypostatic union. In Christ, both natures are complete. As God, He possesses the fullness of divine nature. As man, He possesses all that belongs to human nature.

"When the word was made flesh," says St. Augustine, "Divinity was not changed into flesh, Divinity assumed flesh . . . nor is it allowed to believe that there was anything lacking to the human nature that was assumed."[5]

"Wherefore it behooved him (Christ) in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God, that he might be a propitiation for the sins of the people."[6]

By the Incarnation the divine and human natures did not become one nature in Christ. Both natures re-

[5] St. Augustine, Enchiridion, c. 34.
[6] St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews ii, 17.

mained distinct. The Son of God became man at the moment of conception. The body of Christ was developed like a mere human body. Christ was "born of the Virgin Mary."

Christ will not lay aside His human nature for all eternity. The union between the two natures in Christ is eternal. Christ is the natural Son of God. Men are called the adopted sons of God. However, Christ, viewed both in His divine and His human nature, is the natural Son of God. It is heretical to say that Christ as man is merely the adopted son of God.

As St. Hilary says: "We are the sons of God, but not such as this Son. For He is the true and proper Son; by origin, not by adoption, in truth, not merely in name; by birth, not by creation."[7]

Christ as man was subject to hunger, thirst, fatigue, sorrow, suffering and

[7] St. Hilary, De Trinitate, l-iii, n. 11.

death. "For we have not a high priest," says St. Paul, "who can not have compassion on our infirmities; but one tempted in all things, like as we are, without sin."[8]

Christ freely suffered the defects that were natural to His body. He could have exempted Himself miraculously from all corporal inconveniences and infirmities had He so willed. Yet He fasted, and labored, and was weary, and footsore, out of love for us. These infirmities are indeed the penalty of sin. Christ bore them for us. "He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows."[9]

Yet Christ suffered no sickness nor physical deformities. Hence, the early Fathers and the great teachers all maintain that Christ possessed great manly beauty. He assumed human nature in all its perfection without any

[8] St. Paul to the Hebrews iv, 15.
[9] Isaias liii, 4.

of its defects. Surely then His body was perfect and most beautiful.

Christ possessed all the human sentiments. Love, friendship, pity, sympathy, all found a tender place in the breast of Jesus. He understood fear and sadness and dejection. "My soul is sorrowful," He said, "even unto death . . . if it be possible let this chalice pass away from Me."[10]

[10] St. Matthew xxvi, 38, 39.

CHAPTER III.

Jesus Christ.

CHRIST was born in Bethlehem. The present era dates from the birth of Christ. For this reason it is called the Christian era. According to the calendar now in use, Christ was born in the seven hundred and fifty-fourth year after the founding of Rome.[1] The Gospel relates the event in a simple manner: "And she (Mary) brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger."[2]

Christ was indeed the "first-born" of His Virgin Mother. With the Jews, the first-born son enjoyed special priv-

[1] All agree that there is an error of some years in our calendar. Most authors place the birth of Christ in the year of Rome 749.

[2] St. Luke ii, 7.

ileges. For this reason an only son was also designated as the first-born. This and another incident have led certain critics to maintain that Mary was the mother of other children.

On a certain occasion the disciples said to Jesus: "Behold thy Mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking thee."[3] These "brethren" were His cousins, James, Jude, Joseph and Simon, the sons of Cleophas (Alpheus) and Mary. This Mary was the sister of the Blessed Virgin.[4] In the idiom of the Hebrew language "brethren" may mean brothers or cousins.

On the eighth day after His birth, Jesus was taken to the temple to be presented to the service of the Lord. At the same time, He was circumcised according to the law and given the name of Jesus. "Jesus" means "Saviour." The angel had said to Joseph:

[3] St. Matthew xii, 46.

[4] Fouard, Life of Christ, vol. I, appendix V.

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins."[5]

Christ had come, as He declared years afterward, "not to destroy, but to fulfill (the law)."[6] Hence, it was that He underwent the ceremony of circumcision. The Church celebrates the Feast of the Circumcision, January the first. It is a Holyday of obligation.

Then the Magi came from the East to adore the new-born Christ. They are commonly called the "Wise Men." Tradition gives their names as Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar, or Bithisarea, Melchior and Gathaspa. They are also called the "Three Kings." They are sometimes said to be Zoroastrian priests.

The Magi were a class of nobility amongst the Medes and Persians. The

[5] St. Matthew i, 21.
[6] St. Matthew v, 17.

priests and many high officials of state belonged to this class. Amongst them were also found magicians and interpreters of dreams.

The Magi came to adore our Saviour because they had seen "his star" in the East. The apparition must have astonished them. Doubtless, however, an interior inspiration made known its meaning to them. Origen and many other early Fathers believe that the Magi had been awaiting the coming of the Messias from a knowledge of Balaam's prophecy: "A star shall rise out of Jacob and a scepter shall spring up from Israel."[7]

It is very probable that the great Messianic prophecies became known to the Magi during the captivity of the Israelites in Persia. Nor is it strange that these men, so filled with religious sentiment, should have been the favored ones. For the whole

[7] Numbers xxiv, 17.

world was, at that time, looking forward to the coming of the Redeemer.[8]

Herod had asked the Magi to come back and tell him where he might find the "King of the Jews." But an angel appeared to them and told them to return by another way. Then Herod became very angry. He sent his soldiers to Bethlehem to kill all the male children that were not over two years of age. This cruel act has gone down in history as the Slaughter of the Innocents.

This barbarous cruelty of Herod was a forecast of the bitter persecution that the followers of Christ might expect in ages to come. Herod had thought to include the Infant Redeemer in the massacre. But after the Magi had departed, "an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, take the child and his

[8] Dictionnaire de la Bible, Vigouroux, Fasc. xxiv. Mage, Paris, 1910.

mother, and fly into Egypt; and be there until I shall tell thee."[9]

Later Herod was seized with a hideous disease. "A fire glowed in him slowly. . . . His intestines were also ulcerated . . . part of him was putrefied and produced worms . . . He had also convulsions in all parts of his body, which increased the stench to an insufferable degree."[10]

After the death of Herod, the Holy Family returned. They then took up their abode in Nazareth.

For the next thirty years, the life of Jesus is shrouded in obscurity. But once does He seem to have broken the seclusion of these years spent in the humble home of Mary and Joseph at Nazareth. It was His appearance amongst the doctors in the temple.

[9] St. Matthew ii, 13.

[10] The works of Josephus, pp. 527, 528. Translated by William Whiston, A. M. Published by David McKay, Philadelphia.

Jesus was then twelve years of age. These doctors were men learned in the law. All were permitted to ask them questions. Jesus surprised them with the wisdom of His questions and answers.

The Scriptures are silent on the rest of His hidden life. The Gospel says: "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them."[11]

Tradition says that Jesus worked with His foster-father all these years as a humble carpenter. This He did to teach us the way of humility and meekness. When He was about thirty years of age, He entered upon His public ministry.

John the Baptist, the Precursor, went forth to announce the coming of Christ. He preached penance to the people, crying out: "Prepare ye the

[11] St. Luke ii, 51.

way of the Lord; make straight his paths."[12]

He also administered to them the "baptism of penance for the remission of sins."[13] This baptism was merely "the baptism of water." The Sacrament of Baptism was instituted later by Christ.

Jesus also came and was baptized by John. Then "Jesus being baptized . . . the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, as a dove upon him; and a voice came from Heaven: Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."[14]

Jesus the Holy One, the all-pure God Himself, needed not baptism for the remission of sins. It was done, however, to sanction the preaching and the baptism of John. Furthermore, it had been ordained as the

[12] St. Luke iii, 4.
[13] St. Luke iii, 3.
[14] St. Luke iii, 21-22.

occasion on which Jesus was first publicly manifested as the Son of God.

Afterwards, Jesus retired into the desert where He spent forty days in fasting and prayer. During this time He was tempted by the devil. These temptations were directed toward the humanity of Jesus alone. As they could not have been temptations of the flesh, they were mere external suggestions. The devil evidently wished to learn if He were really the promised Messias.

Jesus, by this long period spent without food or drink in the wilderness, taught us, through a beautiful example, the great value of fasting. For self-denial was to be a fundamental practice of Christianity.

The holy season of Lent is observed by the Church each year in honor of Christ's fast. By permitting the devil to tempt Him, Jesus wished to teach us that no one is so holy as to be above

temptation. He wished also to show that the strongest temptation is futile in the presence of prayer and fasting.

Jesus chooses His disciples. He gathered around Him those twelve guileless men whom He wished to train as the first ministers of His Church. For the next three years they are His constant companions. He is their friend and teacher. This was the humble beginning of Christ's Church. Yet it was to teach the Gospel to all the nations of the world unto the end of time.

Jesus wrought many great miracles. His first miracle was worked at His Blessed Mother's request. He changed water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana. The circumstances of this miracle indicate that Jesus did not intend to suppress human nature in His followers. He desired but to control and elevate their natural inclinations.

The love and compassion of Jesus for mankind is manifest in the miracles that He worked. He healed the sick. He cured the paralytic and the leper. He restored the lifeless child of Jairus. He stopped the funeral cortege of an only son and gave him back in life to his widowed mother. He called forth Lazarus from the tomb and restored him to his sorrowing sisters. He fed the multitudes with miraculous loaves in the desert. He stilled the tempest. He walked on the waters. He drove out devils from those that were possessed. He read the secrets of men's hearts.

The disciples of John the Baptist came to ask Jesus if He were really the Messias. He answered them: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see; the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed; the deaf hear; the dead rise again; the

poor have the Gospel preached to them."[15]

Jesus loved to call Himself the Son of Man. By this title He indicated that, whilst he possesses the fullness of Divinity, He is, nevertheless, true man.

On a certain occasion Jesus took three of His disciples, Peter, James and John, and went up into a high mountain. "And he was transfigured before them," says the Gospel, "and his face did shine as the sun; and his garments became white as snow."[16] Christ's body was not transformed. Nor did it assume the glorified state of those that are in Heaven. He merely allowed the glory of His Divinity to shine, as it were, upon His Own countenance.

Then appeared Moses and Elias talking with Him. These were two

[15] St. Matthew xi, 4-5.
[16] St. Matthew xvii, 2.

great champions of His law. Then a bright cloud overshadowed them. This is a familiar sign of divine protection. It would seem that Jesus wished to impress upon His disciples the fact that there was no conflict between the Old Law and the New. He was now ready to found the New Covenant with man.

The time of suffering was drawing near for Jesus. He allowed the people on this occasion to give expression to their love for Him. Seated upon an ass, He drew near to Jerusalem. The whole multitude began to cry out with joy. They praised God for the great, good deeds Jesus had done amongst them. They spread their garments on the ground before Him. Taking palm branches in their hands, they marched before Him crying: "Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the

Lord; peace in Heaven and glory on high."[17]

Doubtless some of those who glorified Christ on that day cried out also with the rabble in front of Pilate's house a few days later: "Crucify Him."[18]

Such indeed was the indignity Jesus suffered. On the evening before His Passion, He went into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Here He thought of all the bitter ingratitude and all the sufferings He would have to endure. It overwhelmed His human nature. So intense was His agony that a bloody sweat trickled down His body. A bloody sweat may take place from natural causes. Yet Christ's blood-sweat is generally considered miraculous.

Jesus said to His disciples: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death."[19]

[17] St. Luke xix, 38.
[18] St. Mark xv, 13, 14.
[19] St. Matthew xxvi, 38.

Jesus possessed the beatific vision every moment of His life. Hence, His soul must ever have been filled with peaceful joy. Some scholars find it difficult, in face of this fact, to understand how He could undergo such sorrow.

"The joy of beatitude," says St. Thomas, "is not directly opposed to the sorrows of suffering because they do not pertain to the same thing."[20] It was not merely the knowledge of suffering that made Jesus sorrowful. It was especially the sins of man.

He is suffering in man's stead for all the sinfulness and ingratitude of humanity. "My Father," He cried out, "if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not so as I will but as thou wilt."[21] Here Jesus gives us a sublime example of true fortitude and of holy resignation to the will of God in time of sorrow.

[20] Summa Theologica iii, a 46, 8a, ad i um.
[21] St. Matthew xxvi, 39.

Then He goes to drink the bitterest quaff of His chalice. One of His Own twelve comes to betray Him. Judas kissed His Master. This was a concerted sign for the rabble to seize Him.

Judas is a pitiful example of a man who allows his heart to become tainted with an unlawful affection. Judas was one of the twelve chosen ones. Like theirs, his name would have gone down through the ages in endless benediction. Jesus permitted this scandal to take place in His little band of followers to teach us that we must not be shaken in our Faith should scandals occur in the Church.

One of His followers drew his sword and struck one of the rabble. He cut off his ear. But Jesus stretched forth His hand and healed the injured man. He wished to teach us that His followers should be children of meekness and not of vengeance.

Then they led Jesus to Caiphas.

There they accused Him of blasphemy. Afterwards they mocked Him, crowned Him with thorns and scourged Him. They even spit upon Him, and struck Him in the face.

Next they led Him to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. They demanded that he pass sentence of death upon Him. But Pilate wished to release Him. For he found no guilt in Him. He led Him out upon the portico so that the multitude might see Him. He thought they would have pity on Him.

But the chief priests and Pharisees had stirred up the people. They were embittered against Jesus because of His teaching. They had posed before the people as sanctified. They were the leaders of the people. They interpreted the law according to their own ideas. They feared that they would lose their positions if Jesus should prevail. Hence, they sought to destroy Him.

The multitude rarely thinks for itself.

These proud scribes and Pharisees went about amongst the people. They told them that Jesus was a blasphemer. They urged them to cry out: "Crucify Him." Thus it happened that the people turned against him. Doubtless many of them had tasted the love and kindness of Jesus. Yet now they cried out: "Release unto us Barabbas; crucify Him; crucify Him."[22]

A scene similar to this was enacted fifteen hundred years later in the Church of Christ. She, too, was betrayed by the kiss of a chosen disciple. She, too, heard the rabble calling for her destruction. They had received her blessings. They were the children of those whom she had led from the dark gloom of barbarism. Yet they rose up against her and demanded, from wordly princes, that she be condemned to death.

It was decided that Jesus should be crucified. Crucifixion was an igno-

[22] St. Luke xxiii, 18-21.

minious form of death. It was reserved especially for slaves and criminals. No Roman citizen could be crucified. It would have been a disgrace to the State.

They made a heavy cross, placed it upon the shoulders of Jesus. They forced Him to carry it through the streets of Jerusalem and up the Mount of Calvary. Here they stripped Him and nailed Him to the cross. They then planted the cross between the crosses of two thieves who were crucified with Him.

Pilate had placed on the cross a sign bearing the words, written in Latin, Hebrew and Greek: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." In Latin it reads: "Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum." For this reason our crucifixes generally bear an inscription with the letters: "I. N. R. I."

The sorrowful journey to Calvary is depicted in every Church by the fourteen stations of the cross. The

beautiful devotion called "The Way of the Cross" is made by passing from one to the other of these pictures, praying before each, and meditating on the Passion of our Lord.

Jesus prays for His enemies and His cruel executioners and dies upon the cross. St. Luke describes this most tragic event of the world's history with the simple words: "And Jesus crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit. And saying this, he gave up the ghost."[23]

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took Christ's body down from the cross. Joseph had obtained permission from Pilate to do so. It was then placed in the tomb hewn out of the solid rock. No one had as yet been buried therein. There was a great stone which served to close the entrance.

The Jews, fearing that the disciples would steal the body of Jesus away,

[23] St. Luke xxiii, 46.

asked Pilate to place a guard of soldiers at the tomb. This was done. Besides they sealed the stone that enclosed the entrance to the tomb.

In His last moments, Christ had said: "It is consummated."[24] The work of Redemption is completed. The divine Saviour of the world has suffered and died for His people. The greatest chapter of the world's history has been closed. The lifeless body of Christ is laid in the tomb. This tomb shall henceforth be the sign of life.

On Calvary stands an empty cross. A bright star was the sign of His coming. A bleak cross upon a lonely hill is the sign of His passing. Yet this cross shall be glorified. It shall stretch forth its arms of love from the towers of multiplied millions of temples throughout the world in all ages. It shall be the sign of hope for all nations that will ever inhabit the earth.

[24] St. John xix, 30.

CHAPTER IV.

Jesus The Messias Rejected.

THE Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob, said to Jesus: "I know that the Messias cometh (who is called Christ); therefore, when he is come he will tell us all things. Jesus saith to her: I am he, who am speaking with thee."[1]

Jesus is indeed the Christ promised by the prophets. Yet He does not answer to the ideas that the Jews had formed of Him.[2] He well knew their prejudices. During a certain feast, "Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews wondered, saying: How doth this man know letters, having never learned? Jesus answered

[1] St. John iv, 25-26.

[2] Dictionnaire de la Bible, Vigouroux, Fasc. xxi, Jesus Christ. (Paris, 1910.)

them and said: My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. . . . Behold he speaketh openly and they say nothing to him."[3]

Some of them remarked: "Have the rulers known for the truth that this is the Christ? But we know this man whence he is; but when the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. Jesus therefore cried out in the temple teaching and saying: You both know me, and you know whence I am: and I am not come of myself; but he that sent me, is true, whom you know not. I know him because I am from him, and he hath sent me. . . .

"But of the people many believed in him and said: When the Christ cometh, shall he do more miracles, than these which this man doth? The Pharisees heard the people murmuring these things concerning him; and the rulers

[3] St. John vii, 14-26.

and Pharisees sent ministers to apprehend him."[4]

Jesus here tells the Jews that they well know whence He is, and that they are wilfully ignorant of His origin. In spite of the many proofs He has given them, they refuse to believe that He is from the Father. The Pharisees feared that the people would believe in Him. Hence they wished to have Him seized and put to death. They maintained that He had broken the law by healing a man on the Sabbath Day.

The Jews looked forward to the Messias as their future king. They knew that He would establish a kingdom. Hence they supposed that He would come with pomp and splendor. They thought He would come like a great conqueror to proclaim His power by one bold stroke.

Jesus knew their ideas, "And being

[4] St. John vii, 14-32.

asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said: The kingdom of God cometh not with observation (it is not an earthly kingdom.) Neither shall they say: Behold here or behold there. For the kingdom of God is within you."[5]

The kingdom of God is the divine power working in the souls of men. Its mission is to enlighten them, to sanctify them, to save them. "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying: The time is accomplished, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the Gospel."[6]

There is no place for worldly ambition in the kingdom of God. Once the mother of the Zebedees brought them to Jesus to ask preferment for them. Jesus merely said to them:

[5] St. Luke xvii, 20, 21.
[6] St. Mark i, 14-15.

"Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?"[7] He would ask them, "Can you suffer with Me?" For the courage to suffer is a quality that He requires of all His disciples.

When the sons of Zebedee had expressed their willingness to suffer with Him, He said: "You know that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them (their subjects); and they that are the greater exercise power upon them. It shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be the greater among you, let him be your minister: and he that will be first among you, shall be your servant."[8]

These ideas were all foreign to the minds of the proud Jewish leaders. The people indeed would have believed in Jesus had it not been for their false teachers. "The ministers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees,

[7] St. Matthew xx, 20-28.
[8] St. Matthew xx, 25-28.

and they said to them: why have you not brought him? The ministers answered: Never did man speak like this man. The Pharisees, therefore, answered them: Are you also seduced? Hath any one of the rulers believed in him, or of the Pharisees? But this multitude that knoweth not the law, are accursed."[9]

It is the same argument used by insincere teachers of error today. "Look at us, we are the scholars; not one of us believes. We are the powerful ones; we do not believe. Follow our example; it is only the ignorant that believe." God alone knows how many simple-hearted people have been thus deceived. They do not realize that these "learned and powerful" ones are personally interested in keeping the truth from them.

When Nicodemus asked that Jesus be judged fairly, they answered and said: "Art thou also a Galilean?

[9] St. John vii, 45-49.

Search the Scriptures, and see, that out of Galilee a prophet riseth not."[10]

"Search the Scriptures, and see," they said. Yet it was that very thing that they did not want. They did not want to "see." They knew from the Scriptures that the Messias was to come from Bethlehem. But they were unwilling to investigate the place of Jesus' birth. They "searched the Scriptures" not to discover the truth, but to find excuses for their unbelief.

This is the argument upon which modern Christian sects are based. The men who start them "search the Scriptures"[11] Yet in this they are not seeking the truth. They are seeking to justify their unbelief.

A few days before His passion, Jesus went to the temple. He healed the sick and afflicted that were brought to Him. It was the day of His triumphal

[10] St. John vii, 52.
[11] St. John v, 39.

entry into Jerusalem. "The multitude, therefore, gave testimony, which was with him, when he called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead. For which reason, also, the people came to meet him, because they heard that he had done this miracle.

"The Pharisees, therefore, said among themselves: Do you not see that we prevail nothing? Behold, the whole world is gone after him. When they told Jesus that some Gentiles were come to see him, he said: The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. . . . If any man minister to me him will my Father honor. . . . And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself. . . .

"The multitude answered him: we have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever; and how sayest thou: The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man? Jesus therefore said to them: Yet a little while

the light is among you. Walk whilst you have the light that the darkness overtake you not. . . .

"And whereas he had done so many miracles before them, they believed not in him. . . . However, many of the chief men also believed in him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, that they might not be cast out of the synagogue. For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God."[12]

It was the old weakness of man's nature, human respect. They believed in Jesus. Yet they were ashamed to confess Him. They feared they would lose their social position.

"But Jesus cried, and said: He that believeth in me, doth not believe in me, but in him that sent me. And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world;

[12] St. John xii, 17-46.

that whosoever believeth in me, may not remain in darkness."[13]

Jesus knew the hypocrisy and malice of the Scribes and Pharisees. On a certain occasion, after the Scribes and Pharisees had tried to ensnare Him, He condemned them in forceful terms. "They bind heavy and insupportable burdens," He said, "and lay them on men's shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them . . . and all their works they do for to be seen by men. They love the first place at feasts. . . . And salutations in the market-places. . . .

"But woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter. . . . You devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers . . you go round about the sea and the

[13] St. John xii, 44-45.

land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him a child of hell twofold more than yourselves."[14]

It would almost seem that Christ were speaking of certain modern churches. It is all so like their parade of virtue. It describes their display of good works. It pictures their gospel of hate toward those whose creed differs from theirs.

"Blind guides," Jesus continues, "who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you are like to whitened sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness. So you also outwardly indeed appear to men just; but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."[15]

These are the men who wore a

[14] St. Matthew xxiii, 4-15.
[15] St. Matthew xxiii, 24-28.

placard on their forehead on which was written the word "just." They carried long faces. They made long prayers on the street corners. Yet all the while they were plotting to destroy Jesus. This they did in the name of religion. It was all for the honor of God and for the benefit of their fellow man. They had converted the law of God into a human system. They had introduced all sorts of hypocritical practices. It is always wise to beware of those who set themselves up as "sanctified."

Jesus "came into his own, and his own received him not."[16] Well might He weep over the city of Jerusalem. Well might He also weep over the world today. For that same hypocrisy is striving to overthrow His Church. Again He might exclaim: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killeth the prophets, and stonest them that are sent

[16] St. John i, 11.

unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not."[17]

Jesus was a victim of man's pride and prejudice. The people loved Him. They saw the divine power manifested in Him. Yet the people are easily seduced. In their simplicity they listened to the accusations of the scribes and Pharisees. Had they judged Jesus by His life and teaching, they would have accepted Him as the promised Messias. But they trusted in these "sanctified" Pharisees. It did not occur to them that these men were seducing them. Hence, they were easily persuaded to cry out: "Crucify Him."

[17] St. Matthew xxiii, 37.

CHAPTER V.

The Divinity of Christ.

THE prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ prove that He was the promised Messias. The many miracles that He worked prove that He was, at least, sent by God. The whole civilized world recognizes the wonderful work of Jesus Christ's short life. Even the most hardened infidel or unbeliever considers Him a great prophet. For nineteen centuries no one has ever attacked the sanctity and integrity of His life.

Yet he who denies the divinity of Christ must, to be consistent, deny Him also common honesty. If Jesus Christ were not divine, He would be the basest deceiver that the world has ever known. If Jesus were not God,

He would be the most notorious impostor of all ages. For He acted as God; He taught as God; and He declared Himself God. It is impossible to imagine baser deceit than for a mere human being to pose as God, and to accept divine homage from those who follow him.

True, indeed, many of the pagan emperors of ancient Rome sought to receive divine homage from the people. They set up their statues in the temples of the gods. Yet they merely wished to share in the honor that was shown to the pagan gods. They did not pretend to possess divine power. Nor did they essay to work miracles in their own name.

Jesus Christ claimed divine origin. He asserted divine authority. He used the right and prerogatives that belong to God alone.

The great prophets began their teachings with the words: "Thus saith the

Lord," but Christ says: "I say unto you."[1]

Jesus threatens His hearers with what will happen on the day of Judgment if they do not do what He tells them. "Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, cast out devils in thy name, and done many miracles in thy name? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, you that work iniquity."[2] Surely a mere prophet could not utter these words. He shall sit in judgment. Many shall prophesy and work miracles in His name.

Yet Jesus speaks even more clearly of the last Judgment: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in Heaven . . . and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven with much power and

[1] St. Matthew v, 22.
[2] St. Matthew vii, 22-23.

majesty and he shall send his angels with a trumpet, and a great voice; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them."[3] Surely this is the part of God so to come in majesty to judge the world.

Jesus said to His disciples: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me."[4] A mere prophet could not have asked such love. He promises eternal life to those that leave all things for Him: "And everyone that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother . . . for my name's sake . . . shall possess eternal life."[5] None but God could make such a promise.

Jesus gives power to the Apostles to work miracles. "Then calling together

[3] St. Matthew xxiv, 30-31.
[4] St. Matthew x, 37.
[5] St. Matthew xix, 29.

the twelve Apostles, he gave them power and authority over devils, and to cure diseases."[6]

Jesus promises to be with them to the end of the world. While sending forth the Apostles to preach the Gospel, He says to them: "Behold, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."[7]

On a certain occasion, Christ said to the Apostles: "Whom do men say that the Son of man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God! And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; because flesh and blood

[6] St. Luke ix, 1.
[7] St. Matthew xxviii, 20.

hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven."[8]

No special revelation from God would have been necessary for Peter to declare Christ a prophet. For it was evident that even the people considered Him a great prophet. Jesus continues: "And I say to thee: Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."[9]

No one would declare that the Church of Christ were merely the Church of a prophet. Nor could a prophet give power and authority to men by which their decisions would be ratified in heaven.

[8] St. Matthew xvi, 13-17.
[9] St. Matthew xvi, 18-19.

Christ accepted divine homage from His followers. "Thomas answered, and said to him: My Lord and my God."[10] "And when they that were in the boat came and adored him saying: Indeed thou art the Son of God."[11]

St. John the Baptist gave testimony of Him: "The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sins of the world. . . . And I saw, and gave testimony, that this is the Son of God."[12]

Even the demons testified to Christ's divinity: "And behold, they cried out, saying: What have we to do with thee, Jesus, Son of God?"[13] "What have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy

[10] St. John xx, 28.
[11] St. Matthew xiv, 33.
[12] St. John i, 29, 34.
[13] St. Matthew viii, 29.

us? I know who thou art, the Holy One of God."[14]

When Martha told Him that her brother was dead, "Jesus said to her: I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live. And everyone that liveth, and believeth in me, shall not die forever. Believeth thou this? She saith to him: Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world."[15]

The Samaritans said: "We ourselves have heard him, and know that this is the Saviour of the world."[16] Even the soldiers testified to Christ: "Now the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things

[14] St. Mark i, 24.
[15] St. John xi, 25-27.
[16] St. John iv, 42.

that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God."[17]

Jesus declared again and again that He would grant eternal life. He also asserted that He is one with God the Father. "The Jews therefore came round about him and said to him: How long dost hold our souls in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them: I speak to you and you believe not; the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me. But you do not believe because you are not of my sheep (my followers). My sheep hear my voice: and I know them, . . . and they shall not perish forever. . . . I and the Father are one."[18]

They were jealous of Jesus and sought to stone Him. "The Jews then took up stones to stone him. Jesus answered them: Many good works I have shewed

[17] St. Matthew xxvii, 54.
[18] St. John x, 24-30.

you from my Father: for which of those works do you stone me? The Jews answered him: For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because thou being a man, makest thyself God."[19]

The Jews had asked Him to tell them whether He were really Christ. When He declared His divinity, claiming to be one with the Father, "The Jews then took up stones to stone him."[20]

The law prescribed stoning for blasphemy. The worst form of blasphemy was for a man to lay claim to Divinity. "The Jews sought the more to kill him because he did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God."[21] "The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees,

[19] St. John x, 31-33.
[20] St. John x, 31.
[21] St. John v, 18.

gathered a council, and said: What do we, for this man doth many miracles?"[22]

Jesus says that He and the Father will dwell in the hearts of those who love Him: "Jesus answered and said to him: If any one love me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him, and we will make our abode with him."[23] Jesus declared that to see Him was to see the Father: "He that seeth me, seeth the Father also."[24]

Once "a certain man running up and kneeling before Him asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may receive life everlasting? And Jesus said to him, why callest thou me good? None is good but one, that is God."[25] Jesus wishes to make him understand that God alone is good of Himself and

[2] St. John xi, 47.
[3] St. John xiv, 23.
[4] St. John xiv, 9.
[5] St. Mark x, 17-18.

that he should not only consider Him good, but also divine. For He says to the man: "If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."[26] Not only goodness, then, but also perfection consists in following Jesus, after having shown love for our fellow man.

St. Paul testifies many times to Christ's divinity: "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporally."[27] "Whose are the Fathers and of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed forever. Amen."[28] "And to the angels he saith: He that maketh his angels spirits, and his messengers a flame of fire. But to the Son; thy throne, O God, is forever and ever."[29]

[26] St. Mark x, 21.
[27] Epistle to the Colossians ii, 9.
[28] Epistle to the Romans ix, 5.
[29] Epistle to the Hebrew i, 7, 8.

St. Peter preaching to the Jews said: "The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom indeed you delivered up and denied before the face of Pilate, when he judged he should be released. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. But the author of life you killed."[30] Again the same Apostle writes: "Simon Peter, servant and Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained equal faith with us in the justice of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ."[31]

Jesus made a public profession of His divinity in the highest Jewish court of justice. For this He was condemned to the death of a blasphemer. "And the high priest said to him: I adjure thee by the living

[30] Acts of the Apostles iii, 13, 15.
[31] II Epistle of St. Peter i, 1.

God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God. Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said it. Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed: what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy: What think you? But they answering, said: He is guilty of death."[32]

The Jews then dragged Jesus to Pilate. When he asked them what charge they brought against Jesus, "The Jews answered him: We have a law: and according to the law he ought to die, because He made himself the Son of God."[33]

If Christ be not God, then Christianity is but a base deception. The

[32] St. Matthew xxvi, 63-66.
[33] St. John xix, 7.

sacred Scriptures are but a texture of myths and lies. Christ is then reduced to the condition of a magician. He is then a mere impostor who sought to make his life fit the Messianic prophecies. But if this were true, He should have tried to conform to the ideas of the people.

The people expected a Messias who would come in power and splendor. They thought that He would institute a reign of worldly glory for them. Yet Jesus came in humility, poverty, and obscurity. He promised them, not glory, but suffering and persecution. Then Jesus said to His disciples: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."[34]

"If the history of Jesus related in the Gospels be not true, then it is a mere invention. Yet it is absurd to suppose that a few unlettered fishermen

[34] St. Matthew xvi, 24.

could invent a hero of so sublime, so holy, and so pure a life as that of Jesus Christ. 'If the life and death of Socrates are those of a wise man,' says Rosseau, 'the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of a God.' Contrary to the custom of deceivers, the Evangelists describe the minutest detail of time and place and persons. Had those untutored men been deceivers how could they have succeeded in establishing their fraud so perfectly as to overthrow, not only Judaism, so ancient and deeply rooted, but also paganism bulwarked by wealth, science, power and a moral code favoring human passions? They succeeded in making the repentant world kneel at the feet of a crucified criminal. They led countless numbers of men to renounce all that they had, till then, believed and practiced. They induced them to adopt a religion offering to the mind unfathomable mysteries and a

moral code contrary to all the instincts of sensual nature. It is a religion that has regenerated humanity. It has created the modern world on the ruins of the old, inspired its morality, its institutions, its laws. A religion that has been everywhere an inexhaustible source of virtue and blessing, which counts among its disciples of all ages, innumerable saints and scholars, could not have been founded upon a lie invented by a few fishermen.

"Profane men have dared to name Jesus Christ with Confucius, Mahomet and Zoroaster, as the founders of four great religions. But go into the lands of Confucius, Mahomet and Zoroaster and see what you find there. Their systems are built upon tradition and some remnant of the Revelation delivered to Abraham. Yet they have done nothing to elevate the people who have followed them for multiplied centuries. Look first at China: what has she

done? By what deeds has she revealed herself to the world? . . . This people, dead in an active pride, is shut up within itself, and has not even once during three thousand years felt an electric shock of love and of genius. Come nearer, look at India. All the conquerors and all the merchants have been there. She has given gold, pearls, diamonds, ivory, to all that have desired them: . . . do you know anything else of her except her sensuality? There remain the nations into whose hands Mahomet placed the scimeter and Islamism, and they have certainly made illustrious use of the one and the other. Yet, where are they? . . . the success of their arms hiding no longer the wretchedness of their civilization. We look on, not at their decadence, but at their last gasp."[35]

[35] Lacordaire's Conferences, 10th Conference. Translated from the French by Henry Langdon. P. O'Shea, publisher, 7 Barclay Street, New York.

The words of the Gospel may well be cited: "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, you may have life in his name."[36]

[36] St. John xx, 30, 31.

CHAPTER VI.

Christ Risen.

THE death of Christ took place on Friday. It was probably the 15th day of the Jewish month Nisan. The Jewish year was made up of twelve lunar months. Each month began with the new moon. The Jewish day was computed from sunset to sunset. The night was divided into three watches; the first ended at midnight, the second, at 3 a. m. and the third, at 6 a. m.

The time from sunrise was divided into twelve hours. The first hour was generally about 6 a. m. The day was divided into four periods; the third hour was about 9 a. m., the sixth, about midday; the ninth, about 3 p. m., and the eleventh was sunset.[1] Thus,

[1] The Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. III, Calendar, Jewish

it is said that Christ died about the "ninth hour,"[2] after three hours' agony on the cross. Christ, then, must have hung on the cross from about noon until 3 p. m.

After Christ's death, "the soldiers therefore came: and they broke the legs of the first and the other that was crucified with him. But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water."[3]

The water that was mixed with the blood would seem to prove that they had pierced the heart. Water is found in the pericardium, the sack that envelops the heart. However, most theologians consider this flow of water miraculous.

[2] St. Matthew xxvii, 46.
[3] St. John xix, 32-34.

The Crucifixion took place on a mount called Calvary, outside the old city of Jerusalem. The Gospel describes that tragic event: "From the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth, until the ninth hour."[4]

At the moment of Christ's death, "the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent. And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose."[5]

"It is the opinion of many that the dead who came out of the graves were not elevated to the glorified state, but that their bodies afterwards returned to their graves. The torn veil in the temple signifies the cessation of the Old Law and the beginning of the New. It was the de-

[4] St. Matthew, xxvii, 45.
[5] St. Matthew xxvii, 51, 52.

struction of the barrier that separated the Jews from the Gentiles."[6]

Jesus was buried and embalmed according to the Jewish custom. His body remained in the tomb three days. "For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights: so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights."[7]

A difficulty may arise here from the fact that Jesus was placed in the tomb Friday evening and arose Sunday morning. However, the Jews always counted the day on which a thing was begun and the day on which it was ended as complete days. "Three days and three nights," therefore, simply signify three natural days. Thus Friday, Saturday and Sunday were the three days on which Christ's body rested in the tomb.

[6] Prael. Dogm. Ch. Pesch., S. J. vol. IV, p. 273, Tertia editio, 1909, Herder.

[7] St. Matthew xii, 40.

During the time in which His body lay in the tomb, Christ "descended into hell," as the Apostles' Creed affirms. Christ did not descend into hell properly so called. He descended into Limbo, the place in which the souls of the just were awaiting Redemption. "Christ also died once for our sins . . . being put to death indeed in the flesh, but enlivened in the spirit, in which also coming he preached to those spirits that were in prison: which had been some time incredulous, when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe."[8]

Christ announced the Redemption to these souls, many of whom had doubtles been stricken with repentance at the time of the flood. St. Augustine says: "Who then except an infidel can deny that Christ was in hell?"[9]

Christ arose from the dead the

[8] I Epistle of St. Peter iii, 18-20.

[9] Epistle 164 ad Evodium, c. 2, n. 3, M 53, 710.

morning of the third day. The great stone suddenly rolled back from the entrance of the tomb. The guards took flight toward the city. When the holy women arrived who had come to bring sweet spices, they found an angel sitting upon the stone. The angel said to them: "Fear not you, for I know you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here for he is risen, as he said."[10]

Christ appeared to many after His resurrection. "He showed himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them (the Apostles)."[11]

The body of Christ, after His resurrection, was glorified. Because of this glorified state, Christ was not naturally visible to the human eye. For this reason He did not appear to all the people, but selected certain ones

[10] St. Matthew xxviii, 5, 6.
[11] Acts of the Apostles i, 3.

who were to be witnesses of His resurrection.

The doctrine of the Resurrection is a fundamental truth of Christianity. It has been attacked by unbelievers in every age since the time of Christ. Some maintain that the Gospel narrative is pure falsehood. Yet no one has ever been able to disprove the historical truth of the Gospel.

Others say that the disciples were imbued with such love for their Master and had such faith in Him that they imagined they saw Him. Yet the very contrary is true. At first, they refused to believe that He had risen. When the holy women told them what they had seen and heard, "these words seemed to them as idle tales; and they did not believe them. But Peter rising up, ran to the sepulchre, and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths laid by themselves; and went away wondering

in himself at that which was come to pass."[12]

Again when Jesus appeared to them they were troubled and doubted: "Jesus stood in the midst of them and saith to them: Peace be to you; it is I, fear not. But they being troubled and frightened, supposed they saw a spirit. And he said to them: Why are you troubled and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me to have."[13]

Even then they did not believe. Then Jesus told them what was written in the law of Moses, in the prophets and the psalms, concerning Him. "Then he opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. And he said to them: Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ

[12] St. Luke xxiv, 11, 12.
[13] St. Luke xxiv, 36-39.

to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day."[14] For a whole week the Apostle Thomas refused to believe the other Apostles when they told him they had seen Christ alive.

On the truth of Christ's resurrection rests the whole fabric of Christianity. St. Paul says: "If Christ be not risen again then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God: because we have given testimony against God, that he hath raised up Christ."[15]

Nineteen centuries of faith and marvelous results prove the resurrection of Christ. If Christ were not risen, then Christianity would be a sham. But not even its bitterest enemies would call Christianity a sham.

The guards who had stood by the tomb came to the city and told the chief priests what they had seen.

[14] St. Luke xxiv, 45, 46.
[15] I Epistle to the Corinthians xv, 14-15.

These enemies of Christ "gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying: Say you, his disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep."[16] It is by these same methods the enemies of Christianity have ever striven to contradict the truth of Christ's resurrection.

Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives in the midst of His disciples. He told them to return to Jerusalem and there await the coming of the Holy Ghost. Then He blessed them and said to them: "You shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up and a cloud received him out of their sight."[17]

Christ had ascended to His eternal

[16] St. Matthew xxviii, 12, 13.
[17] Acts of the Apostles i, 8, 9.

Father. The disciples, filled with wonderment, still stood looking upward. Two angels appeared to them and said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven."[18]

In Heaven Christ sits at the right hand of God the Father. This is, of course, a figure of speech. It is simply meant to express the supreme glory and power and beatitude of Christ in Heaven. It indicates the equality of the Son with the Father. It also shows that the Father and the Son are distinct persons. Though Christ as God has sat "at the right hand of the Father" from all eternity, yet now as God-man He holds that high place in a new manner. His sacred humanity now shares in the glory of His Divinity.

[18] Acts of the Apostles i, 11.

CHAPTER VII.

The Mission of Christ.

CHRIST came to redeem man from sin. By His sufferings and death He paid the infinite price of Salvation. He provided an infinite store of redeeming grace for sinful mankind. Yet this grace of Redemption is not poured directly into each individual soul. It must be sought and won by every rational creature that will be saved.

True, those who have not, as yet, reached the use of reason, may be saved without their own concurrence. However, the rule of Christ's Gospel is that each and everyone must work out his own salvation. "Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father

who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."[1] Christ has decreed that His grace shall come to man through prayer, the seven Sacraments, and the ministry of His Church.

To be saved it is not enough merely to believe in Christ. "What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith but hath not works? . . . Do you not see that by works a man is justified?"[2] St. Paul says: "Wherefore, my dearly beloved brethren, . . . with fear and trembling work out your salvation."[3]

Christ, therefore, in His love for us, came not only to redeem us by His blood, but to teach us the way of salvation. He went about teaching and preaching so that all might learn to work out their salvation. He announced to them that sublime Gospel

[1] St. Matthew vii, 21.

[2] Epistle of St. James ii, 14, 24.

of truth and precept that was to regenerate the world. He revealed to them the tenets and principles of Christianity. These were to remain unto the end of time as the one true and only religion of mankind.

Christ taught with authority. He was not an exhorter nor a mere interpreter. He did not utter opinions and theories. He pronounced definite doctrines and infallible truths. "For he was teaching them," says the Gospel, "as one having power, and not as the scribes and Pharisees."[4]

The scribes and Pharisees were men who had set themselves up as interpreters of the Law. They were proud, exclusive and hypocritical. They were intolerant to all those who refused to accept their views. They accused Christ of being in league with Beelzebub, the prince of devils.[5]

[4] St. Matthew vii, 29.
[5] St. Matthew xii, 24.

Christ taught with dignity and love. "Take up my yoke upon you," He says, "and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls."[6]

The teachings of Christ were intended for all mankind. He adapted His words and expressions to the minds of the most humble. There is a sublime simplicity in the teachings of Christ that has never been found elsewhere. His sayings possess a grandeur that has thrilled the hearts of the greatest scholars in every age. At the same time they are so clear and simple that even little children can comprehend them.

For nineteen centuries hordes of hostile critics have searched the doctrine of Christ from every possible viewpoint. Yet never have they been able to discover one single flaw. Nor have they been able to prove therein the

[6] St. Matthew xi, 29.

slightest inconsistency. Some men in every age perhaps reject Christ's teachings. They build up a human system of Christianity. Yet their children in another age return to the original deposit of truth given by Christ Himself. The truth of Christ's teaching is eternal and immutable.

Christ often spoke in parables, the meaning of which was not clear to His hearers. His disciples asked Him: "Why speakest thou to them in parables?" He answered, "Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to them it is not given. . . . Therefore, do I speak to them in parables: because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. . . . Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear."[7]

The Apostles were to be the teachers

[7] St. Matthew xiii, 10-16.

of Christ's doctrine. He explained the parables to them because they believed in Him. He spoke obscurely to the others because their hearts were hardened against Him.

Christ preached a doctrine that fulfilled and perfected the revelation of God to man. He confirmed all the truths that had been previously revealed. He intended that all men that would henceforth inhabit the earth should be enabled to know the truth of Divine Revelation. He Himself taught with divine authority. "All power is given to me," He says, "In heaven and in earth."[8]

He wanted to preserve His truth pure unto the end of time. Hence he established a ministry which he endowed with divine authority. His first ministers were twelve unlettered men, unschooled in worldly wisdom and knowledge. Perhaps He

[8] St. Matthew xxviii, 18.

chose uneducated men lest we might be led to think that His teaching could be transmitted adown the ages by human intelligence alone.

Divine truth belongs to the sphere of Divine Intelligence. It is of its very nature above the confines of human reason. Nothing less than Divine Authority could define and preserve that Truth. Hence He said to His Apostles: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."[9] The Father had sent Him with authority from Heaven. So He now clothes His Apostles with that same authority. He would not leave them alone with His divine truth. He sends the Holy Ghost to guard their teaching: "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."[10]

If the teachings of Christ were left even for one day to mere human intelligence, we could no longer be certain that we possess them. Christ knew this. He knew that His truth would be torn and disfigured if left to the whims of the human mind. He knew that if it were to be interpreted by mere human authority that it would take a new form in every individual mind. Hence, He established an infallible Church to be the guardian and custodian of His teaching to the end of time.

Christ's teaching was to be perpetuated by a living teacher, not by the dead letter of a lifeless book. He inspired the Sacred Writers to record certain doctrines. Yet He intended that these writings should be interpreted by those whom He had sent to "preach the Gospel to every creature."[11] They alone with

[11] St. Mark xvi, 15.

their successors were empowered to define His teachings. To them alone He said: "He that heareth you heareth me."[12]

There must be, then, an infallible Church upon the earth. In that Church we must be able to find ministers of the Gospel to whom Christ said: "Behold, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."[13] Somewhere today must be found that Church of which Christ Himself said: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."[14]

There must be even today men sent from Christ as Christ was sent from the Father. There must be a Church in which the teachings of Christ are preserved in all their original purity. This Church must have taught the Truth of Christ in all its entirety for

[12] St. Luke x, 16.
[13] St. Matthew xxviii, 20.
[14] St. Matthew xvi, 18.

the past nineteen centuries. This Church must be ruled by the successors of those men to whom Christ sent "the Spirit of Truth to abide with them forever."[15] Our Divine Saviour has assured us of all this.

Yet there is but one Church on earth that even lays claim to infallibility. There is but one Church that traces the succession of her ministers back to the Apostles. There is but one Church that teaches the Gospel to all nations of the earth. There is but one Church in which the doctrines of Christ are clearly defined. There is but one Church that teaches the same unchanged and unchangeable truth to all people of earth. There is but one Church that can claim Christ for its founder. That Church is the Catholic Church.

[15] St. John xiv, 16.

CHAPTER VIII.

Christ's Kingdom On Earth.

CHRIST instituted a religious society. It is a perpetual union of men morally united in doctrine, worship and rule. He placed His Apostles under the leadership of Peter to rule this society. Its object is to teach, govern and sanctify all men. This society is called the Church of Christ.

Christ established a visible Church, the object of which is to teach and sanctify all men and unite them in Faith. This is clearly shown by His prayer to the Father for His Apostles: "Holy Father, keep in thy name whom thou hast given me; that they may also be one, as we also are one. . . . Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the

world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee."[1]

This society is to glorify God through the teachings revealed by Christ: "I have glorified thee on the earth. . . I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me out of the world. Thine they were, and to me thou gavest them; and they have kept thy word."[2]

Christ many times calls this society His kingdom, the kingdom of Heaven, the kingdom of God. When Jesus began His public ministry, He cried out: "Do penance: for the kingdom

[1] St. John xvii, 11-21.
[2] St. John xvii, 4, 6.

of Heaven is at hand."[3] Christ indeed says: "My kingdom is not of this world."[4]

He would have us understand that whilst His kingdom is in the world it does not partake of the world's spirit. He Himself explains His meaning, speaking to His Apostles: "If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."[5] Thus if Christ's kingdom were not on the earth neither were the Apostles on earth.

The kingdom of Christ is not confined to this world. The faithful who die are still members of the Church. For this reason the Apostles' Creed mentions the communion of saints.

The Church embraces three bodies

[3] St. Matthew iii, 2.
[4] St. John xviii, 36.
[5] St. John xv, 19.

of the faithful. Those on earth are called the Church Militant. They are still carrying on the "good fight" against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Those who have entered into Heaven are called the Church Triumphant. They have conquered the prince of darkness and are reigning in glory with God. The faithful in Purgatory are called the Church Suffering. These three great bodies of Christ's Church are united in mutual love.

Christ Himself gave the name of Church to the society of His followers. After St. Peter had confessed his belief in Christ's divinity, Christ said to him: "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."[6] On another occasion, to assert the authority of His Church, He said: "If he will not hear the

[6] St. Matthew xvi, 18.

Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican."[7]

Many times in the New Testament the Church is mentioned as a visible body. "And there came a great fear upon the whole church."[8] "Saul made havoc of the church."[9] St. Paul speaks very clearly of the Church and its hierarchy: "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."[10]

The Apostle admonishes the Corinthians to "Be without offense to the Jews, and to the Gentiles, and to the Church of God."[11] St. Paul often mentions the Church. He refers to it as the whole body of Christians throughout the world: "Christ is the head of the

[7] St. Matthew xviii, 17.
[8] Acts of the Apostles v, 11.
[9] Acts of the Apostles viii, 3.
[10] Acts of the Apostles xx, 28.
[11] I Epistle to the Corinthians x, 32.

Church. . . . Christ also loved the Church and delivered himself up for it. . . . That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."[12]

Separate congregations or centers are sometimes mentioned as churches. However, it is clear that they are but portions of the one Church. In the same manner such expressions are often heard: The Church in New York is strong. The Church in France loves the Holy Father. The Church in China is growing. Yet no one considers these bodies as other than the one Catholic Church as it exists in these different places.

St. Paul says: "The Churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the Church that is in their

[12] Epistle to the Ephesians v, 23-27.

house."[13] Again it is said of St. Paul: "He went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, commanding them to keep the precepts of the Apostles and the ancients."[14] It is clear that he here refers to different congregations of the faithful.

The edifices in which divine services were held were called churches then as they are today. St. Paul says: "Timothy . . . will put you in mind of my ways, which are in Christ Jesus; as I teach everywhere in every church."[15] Again he says: "I hear that when you come together in the church, there are schisms among you."[16]

In the same letter he says: "God is not the God of dissension, but of peace as also I teach in all the churches of the Saints."[17] Had these churches

[13] I Epistle to the Corinthians xvi, 19.
[14] Acts of the Apostles xv, 41.
[15] I Epistle to the Corinthians iv, 17.
[16] I Epistle to the Corinthians xi, 18.
[17] I Epistle to the Corinthians xiv, 33.

been divided in faith and practice like modern Christian sects, St. Paul would have needed a great variety of teaching to satisfy them all.

Christ decreed that His Church should remain until the end of time. He did not intend that it should disappear at the death of the Apostles. Nor did He intend that it should become an invisible Church when the Apostles should die. It is clear that the Apostles were visible and that they united visible people into a society over which they ruled. Not even the most skeptical will deny this fact. Furthermore, the Apostles received authority and assistance from God to enable them to preach the Gospel in all its purity.

This prerogative of divine authority and divine assistance will surely remain with the ministers of Christ as long as His Church exists. Christ's commission to teach all nations implies

a visible society constituted with authority. An invisible society could not teach. Nor could the ministers of Christ teach in an invisible Church.

The Church of Christ is divine and supernatural. It is divine because it was founded by Jesus Christ and endowed with divine authority to carry on the divine mission which He began on earth. "As the Father hath sent me," He says to His Apostles, "I also send you."[18] The Church is supernatural because it uses supernatural means of grace and leads men to eternal salvation. It is supernatural because it was founded by Jesus Christ to fulfil a divine mission on earth.

Christ says to His Apostles: "You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain can not be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are

[18] St. John xx, 21.

in the house. . . . Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."[19] These words of Christ indicate the position His Church was to hold in the world. It was to be a great visible society of His followers. It was to spread the light of the Gospel throughout the world. It was to fulfil the law of God to man.

Writing in the third century, St. Cyprian says: "The Church flooded with the light of the Lord, puts forth her rays throughout the whole world; yet the light is one which is spread over every place, while its unity of body is preserved."[20] St. Cromatius wrote in the fifth century: "A city seated on a hill can not be hid. By this city is here meant the Church, concerning which the divine Scriptures

[19] St. Matthew v, 14-17.

[20] De Unitate, Faith of Catholics, Capel, Vol. 1. p. 192

in many places give testimony, and of which David especially speaks, saying, 'Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God.'[21] . . . As a city, therefore, placed upon a hill, he points out the Church, upon the faith of our Lord and Saviour placed in heavenly glory,—a Church which . . . visible to the whole world, has been made glorious."[22]

The Church has been considered a visible society from the time of the Apostles. External authority was exercised by the Apostles and by their immediate successors. All the early Fathers attest to the external authority of the Church and to her existence as a visible society. St. Paul says: "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls."[23]

[21] Psalm lxxxvi, 3.

[22] Tractatus in Matt. Migne xx, col. 340-341. Vol. I, p. 197-198.

[23] Epistle to the Hebrews xiii, 17.

But the same Apostle refers even more explicitly to the constitution of the Church: "And he gave some Apostles and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: until we all meet in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ: that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive."[24]

In the Acts of the Apostles reference is made again and again to the hierarchy of the Church: "Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath

[24] Epistle to the Ephesians iv, 11-14.

placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God."[25]

The Church has held a prominent place in history from the early centuries. Her popes and bishops and priests have been known as great teachers and benefactors to all nations. Her organization has been a marvel of strength and order throughout the centuries.

It were easier to deny the one-time existence of the great Roman Empire than to deny the existence of the Church in any age of her history. It were easier to prove that the United States or Great Britain are respectively an invisible republic and kingdom than to prove that the Church of Christ was ever invisible since that far-off day when St. Peter preached to the multitude in Jerusalem.

Christ's Church is a perfect society. Its government is so harmonious that

[25] Acts of the Apostles xx, 28.

there is no possibility of conflicting jurisdictions. It is built by the wisdom of God. Well may it be called the body of Christ. Its members are united in perfect harmony. All work in accord with the head, which is our Holy Father the Pope. The Church is the city of God. It is the house of the Lord—foretold by the prophet. "And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it."[26]

[26] Isaias ii, 2.

CHAPTER IX.

The Primacy of St. Petrr.

NO LIVING body can exist without a head. No well regulated society can exist without a chief executive. Even a democracy must have its president. All societies that are governed by several chief rulers are prone to disunion. When Christ founded His Church, He established a perfect society. It was endowed with authority to carry out its end.

Had Christ not established a central government and a chief executive for His Church, He would have been less wise and prudent than the smallest nation of earth. Had He established a Church without any general form of government and especially without any supreme authority, He would have

shown less foresight than the man who establishes a modern labor organization.

No labor union could expect to preserve its unity and inculcate its principles without a central council of some kind. They are all wise enough to have a chief executive. Surely the teachings and practices of Christianity deserve as much consideration from Christ. The founders of so-called modern religions recognized the need of primacy.

When Henry VIII made the Church of England a national religion, he immediately set himself up as its head. The rulers of England still retain this title. Luther set himself up as the head of Lutheranism. Calvin, of Calvinism; Knox, of Presbyterianism. Had these different heads of sects possessed competent authority they would have maintained unity. Yet mere advisory power is not sufficient to hold either states or religions together.

The governors of states are all executives in the republic of the United States. Yet the wise framers of the Constitution saw fit to establish a seat of central government at Washington. There they placed a president to wield the power of primacy over all the governors of individual states. He is the chief executive of the nation.

Fifty years ago the people of certain states declared another man president of the Confederacy. Immediately countless thousands of heroic men rushed to arms and shed their blood to preserve the Union. They knew that the union of the nation would be dissolved were there to be two presidents.

Christ chose the twelve Apostles to rule His Church. He might have placed them all to preside over the central government of the Church. Or He might have chosen several of them for this purpose. If they were all as one body to possess supreme

authority, it would have been difficult indeed to obtain final judgment on any question. For the Apostles went forth into almost every land of the known world soon after the Holy Ghost came upon them.

It would have been a hopeless task in those days, when modern means of communication were unknown, to consult all the Apostles upon any matter relating to teaching or practice. If each individual Apostle possessed the fullness of supreme authority in himself, then Christ established a society not merely with two, but with twelve chief executives to guide its destinies. But this is unthinkable.

Christ chose St. Peter to be the chief of the Apostles. He selected him to be His vicar on earth and the head of His Church. St. Peter and his successors to the end of the world were to be the guardians of unity in the Church.

One day Christ asked the Apostles if they knew who He was. St. Peter answered: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."[1] Christ was pleased with St. Peter's profession of Faith. Then He said to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven."[2] Jesus then told St. Peter that He intended to make him the earthly head of His Church: "Thou art Peter," said He, "and upon this rock I will build my Church."[3]

St. Peter's name had been Simon. Christ had given him the name of Peter when He called him to be one of His Apostles: "And Jesus looking upon him, said: Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter."[4]

[1] St. Matthew xvi, 16.
[2] St. Matthew xvi, 17.
[3] St. Matthew xvi, 18.
[4] St. John i, 42.

Jesus now calls him Peter for the first time. Peter means rock. In Syro-Chaldaic, the language in which Jesus spoke, the word means simply "a rock." It is not used as a proper name. The true meaning of Christ's words is: "Thou art a rock and upon this rock I will build my church."

Christ did not change any other Apostle's name. Christ confirmed His promise by adding: "I will give to *thee* the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."[5] Here Christ plainly tells St. Peter alone that his decrees will be ratified in Heaven.

The fact that Christ later uttered these same words to all the Apostles together makes it still clearer that He had singled out St. Peter in a special

[5] St. Matthew xvi, 19.

manner. Every minister of Christ acts in the name of Christ. His ministerial decrees are ratified in Heaven. When the humblest priest absolves a penitent or refuses him absolution he passes a decision that is ratified in Heaven.

Never did Christ single out any other Apostle with any promise of power or authority. Later on Christ chides St. Peter for his worldly ideas. Jesus "turning, said to Peter: Get behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto me: because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men."[6]

This does not militate against St. Peter's high prerogative. These words of Christ sound harsh indeed in modern language. However, the word Satan in Syro-Chaldaic means one who holds a contrary opinion or one who contradicts. Christ had been telling His disciples of His future sufferings and death.

[6] St. Matthew xvi, 23.

St. Peter called Him to one side and began to argue against such an idea: "And Peter taking him, began to rebuke him, saying: Lord, be it far from thee, this shall not be unto thee."[7]

When Jesus says "get behind me," He means "follow me." Thus His true meaning was: "Come follow me; you are opposing my will; you are not talking like a true follower of mine, you are arguing like a man of the world and not like a man of God." It all serves to show that St. Peter's dignity was not due to his personal merits, but that he was chosen to be the chief of the Apostles because Christ willed it.

Christ often called His Church a sheepfold: He had referred to those who believed in Him as the sheep of His flock and He had designated Himself as the Good Shepherd. The Psalmist had long since said: "Know

[7] St. Matthew xvi, 22.

ye that the Lord he is God; He made us, and not we ourselves. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture."[8]

"I am the Good Shepherd," said Christ, "The Good Shepherd giveth his life for his sheep."[9] "Fear not," He says, "little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom."[10]

Again Christ selects St. Peter from the Apostles and addresses him in a special manner. This time He actually bestows the primacy upon him. He fulfils the promise He had made to him. "Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith to him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith to him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest

[8] Psalm xcix, 3.
[9] St. John x, 11.
[10] St. Luke xii, 32.

that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He said to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time: Lovest thou me? And he said to him: Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee. He said to him: Feed my sheep."[11] Here Christ gives St. Peter charge of both His lambs and His sheep. He makes him chief pastor of the whole flock.

It would indeed have been like a parody for Christ so solemnly to demand this three-fold profession of fidelity from St. Peter unless He intended to bestow some special responsibility upon him. The other eleven might indeed have viewed it as a strange procedure had they not understood that St. Peter was to be their chief.

The Apostles must have understood from the beginning that St. Peter was

[11] St. John xxi, 15-17.

to be first amongst them. St. Peter again and again appears as their spokesman, "Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered him: Lord, to whom shall we go?"[12] When Jesus asked the Apostles what they thought of Him, it was St. Peter that answered.[13]

Whenever the Gospel enumerates the Apostles, St. Peter is always mentioned first. "And the names of the twelve Apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the publican, and James the son of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, Simon the Cananean and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him."[14]

"And he made that twelve should be

[12] St. John vi, 68-69.
[13] St. Matthew xvi, 16.
[14] St. Matthew x, 2-4.

with him, and that he might send them to preach . . . and to Simon he gave the name Peter, and James the son of Zebedee."[15] "He chose twelve of them (whom also he named Apostles): Simon whom he surnamed Peter, and Andrew his brother."[16] "They went up into an upper room, where abode Peter, and John, James."[17]

The sacred Scriptures testify that St. Peter actually fulfilled his mission as chief pastor of the Church. He presided at the council of Jerusalem. This was the first general council of the Church. "There arose some of the sect of the Pharisees that believed, saying: They must be circumcised, and be commanded to observe the law of Moses. And the Apostles and ancients assembled to consider this matter.

[15] St. Mark iii, 14-17.
[16] St. Luke vi, 13-14.
[17] Acts of the Apostles i, 13.

"And when there had been much disputing, Peter rising up said to them: Men brethren, you know that in former days God made choice among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe. . . . Now therefore why tempt you God, to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? . . . And all the multitude held their peace."[18]

Afterwards they sent a letter containing this decree into Syria and Cilicia, saying: "We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also will by word of mouth tell you the same things. For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no further burden upon you."[19] It is clear that St. Peter spoke with authority. His decision was accepted

[18] Acts of the Apostles xv, 5-12.
[19] Acts of the Apostles xv, 27, 28.

by the assembly and sent out to different regions where the question had been raised.

It is sometimes asserted that St. Paul held equal authority with St. Peter. Again it is said that St. Paul was not subject to St. Peter, for it is related that St. Paul rebuked St. Peter on a certain occasion. St. Paul himself relates the incident: "But when Cephas was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that some came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision. And to his dissimulation the rest of the Jews consented, so that Barnabas also was led by them into that dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly unto the truth of the Gospel, I said to Cephas before them all: If thou

being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as the Jews do, how dost thou compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"[20]

We do not know which to admire more in this incident, the courage of St. Paul or the humility of St. Peter. There is no question of authority here. It is not a matter of teaching. Nor is there question of St. Peter's belief or teaching. It was a question of St. Peter's personal behavior.

St. Peter had decided the question in the Council of Jerusalem. Now he is dissimulating for policy's sake. He does not want to offend those who have still retained their Jewish prejudices. It had been unlawful for Jews to mingle with the uncircumcised. Though Jew and Gentile were now united in the Church, there were some who had not yet been reconciled to the admission of the Gentiles. St. Paul, that man of candor,

[20] Epistle to the Galatians ii, 11-14.

reprimands St. Peter for actions which he considers unworthy of him.

The early Fathers, with one accord, refer to St. Peter as the chief pastor of the Church. Tertullian, who lived in the second century, says: "Was anything hidden from Peter, who was called the rock whereon the Church was to be built; who obtained the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and the power of loosing and binding on earth?"[21]

Origin wrote in the third century: "See what is said by the Lord to that great foundation of the Church, the most solid rock on which Christ founded His Church, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"[22]

St. John Chrysostom says: "Peter himself the chief of the Apostles, the first in the Church . . . and when

[21] De Praescript, Haeret, n. 22, p. 209.
[22] In Exod. Hom. v, Migne P. G. Tom. xii, col. 329.

I name Peter, I name that unbroken rock, that firm foundation, the great Apostle, the first of the disciples, the first called and the first who obeyed—he was guilty of a deed not slight, but exceedingly great, even the denying of the Lord. . . . And yet when he wept bitterly, he wiped out his sin; for afterwards the keys of heaven are entrusted to him."[23]

The primacy of St. Peter in no way conflicts with the fact that Christ is the head of the Church. St. Peter is the head of the Church, not by his own authority, but as the chief representative of Christ upon earth. Nor is there any difficulty in the fact that St. Peter is called the rock upon which the Church is built.

Christ is ever the true foundation of the Church. St. Peter represents Christ

[23] Hom. iii, de Poenitentia, n. 4, Migne P. G. Tom. xlix, col. 298.

in this position. St. Augustine explains this question. "Peter the Apostle," he says, "on account of the primacy of his apostleship, bore a character which represented the whole Church . . . when there was said to him, 'I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind, etc.,' he signified the whole Church, which in this world, is, by divers trials, as it were, by rains, rivers, and tempests, buffeted, but falls not because it was built upon a rock, whence Peter derived his name. For the word rock is not derived from the name of Peter, but the name of Peter is derived from the word rock, as 'Christ' is not derived from 'Christian,' but 'Christian' from 'Christ.' For this, therefore, does the Lord say, 'Upon this rock I will build my Church,'[24] because Peter had said, 'Thou art Christ the Son of the living

[24] St. Matthew xvi, 18.

God.'[25] Upon this rock, therefore, which thou hast confessed, I will build my Church. For Christ was the rock, as a foundation, upon which Peter himself was built. For other foundation no man can lay but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. The Church, therefore, which is founded on Christ, received, in Peter, the keys of the kingdom of Heaven from him, that is, the power of binding and loosing sins."[26]

Thus St. Peter was the chief of the Apostles, the first head of the Church, the first Pope. From him a long line of pontiffs have succeeded to this high office down to our present gloriously reigning Pope.

[25] St. Matthew xvi, 16.

[26] Tomus iii, Tractatus cxxiv, in Joannem, n. 5, col. 2470.

CHAPTER X.

The Apostolic Succession.

THE Church must be able to trace the succession of her ministers back to the Apostles. Otherwise she can not claim to be the Church of Christ. No one can be a minister of Christ unless he has been commissioned by Christ to act in His name. The ministry of Christ is an external mission. It is the continuation of Christ's public ministry on earth.

Christ conferred His ministry upon the Apostles in an external manner. He said to them: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."[1] "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name

[1] St. John xx, 21.

of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."[2] "He breathed on them: and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost, Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."[3]

No mere prompting of the heart suffices to make a man partaker of Christ's ministry. It must be conferred as any other external mission is conferred. A man may be well fitted for the duties of ambassador to a foreign court. He may have a great desire to represent his country with a foreign nation. He may even go to some foreign capital, set up offices, and proclaim himself the ambassador of his country. Yet he is not an ambassador until he has been appointed as such by the rightful government of his country. And even when he has

[2] St. Matthew xxviii, 18, 19.
[3] St. John xx, 22-23.

been appointed, he must present his credentials before he is accepted as an official representative of his country. It is not enough if he declare that the chief executive whispered privately to him when he empowered him to act in the name of the country. "For Christ we are ambassadors," says St. Paul, "God, as it were, exhorting by us."[4]

In the natural order of things, a man can speak only for himself. If he speaks for others, it is because he possesses some external authority to speak for them. If one person claims to represent another to us, we have a right to demand his credentials. If he can not present the proper credentials, he may be rightly considered an impostor. It is but reasonable then to demand credentials from those who claim to speak and act in the name of Christ. It is not enough if they tell us that they were commis-

[4] II Epistle to the Corinthians v, 20.

sioned by an internal inspiration to act as ministers of Christ. It is not enough if they tell us that they were ordained to the ministry by some man or body of men. They must be able to prove conclusively that they were ordained by some rightful successor of the Apostles.

If we are to receive the Gospel from the lips of any man, we must know that he is a true successor of those to whom Christ said: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."[5] He alone can say: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."[6] Well may we ask with St. Paul, "How shall they preach unless they be sent?"[7]

In the Catholic Church the Apostolic succession is a historical fact. It is, of course, a doctrine of Faith. The

[5] St. Mark xvi, 15.
[6] St. John vii, 16.
[7] Epistle to the Romans x, 15.

succession of popes can be traced back from the now reigning Pope Benedict XV to St. Peter. From St. Peter to Pope Benedict XV, there have been two hundred and sixty popes. Through them, the power and authority bestowed upon the Apostles by Christ has been transmitted adown nineteen centuries. All bishops of the world are appointed by the pope. The bishops ordain priests. Thus the Apostolic succession extends to each and every bishop and priest on the face of the earth.

The New Testament relates how the ministry of Christ was perpetuated in apostolic times. After the defection of Judas, "They gave lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."[8]

St. Paul was converted, "and the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city and there it shall be told thee

[8] Acts of the Apostles i, 26.

what thou must do."[9] He was not sent at once to preach, but to the disciple Ananias. "The Holy Ghost said to them: Separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them. Then they, fasting and praying and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away."[10] Paul and Barnabas went on their mission, "and when they had ordained to them priests in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord."[11]

St. Clement of Rome, who lived in the first century, says: "The Apostles have preached to us from the Lord Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ from God. Christ, therefore, was sent by God, and the Apostles by Christ. . . . Preaching through countries and cities, they appointed their first priests—

[9] Acts of the Apostles ix, 7.
[10] Acts of the Apostles xiii, 2, 3.
[11] Acts of the Apostles xiv, 22.

having proved them by the Spirit—bishops and deacons of those who were about to believe. . . . Our Apostles appointed the aforesaid and then gave direction in what manner, when they should die, other approved men should succeed them in the ministry."[12]

St. Ireneus, in the second century, gives a list of those who succeeded St. Peter at Rome: "The blessed Apostles then, having founded and built up that Church, committed the sacred office of the Episcopacy to Linus, of whom Paul makes mention in his Epistle to Timothy. To him succeeded Anacletus, and after him the third from the Apostles who obtained the episcopacy was Clement. . . . But to this Clement succeeded Evaristus, and to Evaristus, Alexander. Next to him—thus the sixth from the Apostles—Sixtus was appointed, and after him Telesphorus, who suffered a glo-

[12] Ep. 1 ad Corinthios

rious martyrdom; next Hyginus; then Pius; after whom was Anicetus. To Anicetus succeeded Soter; and to him —the twelfth in succession from the Apostles—succeeded Eleutherius, who now holds the espicopate."[13]

The fact that the papacy was contested several times does not militate against the apostolic succession. Though there were at times one or two antipopes, there was ever but one true pope. There was always a lawfully elected pope, though many may not have acknowledged him as such.

It is an article of Faith that the papacy is attached to the Bishopric of Rome. The bishop of Rome is and always must be the chief pastor of the whole Church. The sojourn of the popes at Avignon in France from A. D. 1305 to 1377 would seem to create a difficulty here. However, the popes of Avignon were bishops of Rome. They

[13] Adversus Haeres, iii, c. 3, n. 3.

had merely taken up their residence outside their diocese.

It is asserted by enemies of the Church that the papacy did not arise until several centuries after the death of the Apostles. No one has ever been able to fix the date of this strange event. Christianity was spread over the whole world. Communication was difficult in those ages. The Faith had been planted in far-off countries amidst peoples far removed from one another. Yet all possessed the same Faith.

It would have been impossible for all these diverse peoples to conspire in acknowledging the bishop of Rome as their chief pastor. Had they not been taught in the beginning that the supreme authority rests in the bishop of Rome, it would have been utterly impossible to introduce such a radical change some centuries later. Human consideration might rather have sug-

gested to them the idea of national and independent churches.

The bishop of Rome possessed no earthly power that could compel them to recognize him as their chief pastor. Had they not received this truth with the original deposit of Faith, they might well have scorned the bishop of Rome the first time he attempted to exercise sovereign jurisdiction over them.

Our opponents describe the bishops of Rome as ambitious men striving for supremacy. Indeed profane history tries to show many examples of such ambition. Yet we find the whole Christian world freely and joyfully acknowledging the supreme authority of Rome. There was nothing to fear if they refused to accept it. The pope had no armies to subdue them and bring them under his domain. It would indeed be strange to find all the Christians of earth spontaneously

giving loving submission to arrogant usurpation.

The long line of popes dating back to the Prince of the Apostles is the grandest monument of history. The papacy is a standing miracle. Against it the fiercest opposition of the enemy has ever been directed. There have been popes indeed whose private lives were not blameless. God permitted this, perhaps, to remind us that the power of the papacy is not human, but divine. Adverse history has painted the lives of several popes in darkest colors. Yet the popes of nineteen centuries stand out as the greatest, the noblest, the purest body of men whose names have ever been recorded in the pages of history.

CHAPTER XI.

The Infallibility of the Church.

CHRIST founded His Church to teach the truths of divine Revelation to all nations unto the end of time. He chose mortal men to be the ministers of His Church. Said He: "Going therefore teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: And behold, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."[1]

The truth which Christ delivered to the Apostles is divine Truth. Christ willed that it should be preserved unto the end of time, free from the slightest taint of error. For He said: "I will

[1] St. Matthew xxviii, 18-20.

ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you, the Spirit of Truth."[2] "But when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth."[3]

The human mind is naturally prone to error. Had Christ left His Truth to the whims of human reason alone, we could never possess it with certainty. It would be for us a matter of doubt, opinion, and dispute. Hence Christ endowed His Church with the divine prerogative of infallibility. He made her proof against error in her teaching.

Infallibility means to be immune from falling into error. It is a dogma of Faith that the Church is infallible when she teaches a doctrine of faith or morals. This prerogative of infallibility is vested in the pope and the college of bishops united under him.

[2] St. John xiv, 16, 17.
[3] St. John xvi, 13.

The pope himself is infallible when he officially, or ex-cathedra, proclaims a doctrine of faith or morals to the whole world. The bishops of the world are infallible when, under the supreme guidance of the pope, they define a doctrine of faith or morals. This may take place in a general council or when the bishops are scattered throughout the world.

A general council is a meeting of the bishops of the world presided over by the pope or his legate. There can be no general council without the sanction of the pope.

Infallibility is not a personal prerogative of the pope; it is an official privilege. It is only when the pope teaches in his official capacity as chief pastor of the Church, and as Vicar of Christ on earth, that he is infallibile. He is not infallible in matters other than the teaching of faith and morals

to the universal Church. The pope is a mere human being. He possesses a mere human intellect with all that it implies.

Nor does the pope possess personal inspiration as did the Apostles. Inspiration is a divine illumination, a divine impulse, a divine guidance and divine assistance in teaching divine truth whether in writing or by word of mouth. Infallibility is but divine assistance in the teaching of divine truth. Infallibility, therefore, excludes, not only actual error, but it shuts out the liability to err. Infallibility does not bestow the faculty of discovering new truth. It simply confers the divine assistance necessary to guard from error the truth that has long since been revealed.

Infallibility is not impeccability. Impeccability excludes the capability of sinning. No pope ever claimed this

privilege. No saint, however holy, has ever possessed this sublime gift.

The doctrine of infallibility has been held in the Church from the beginning. However, the doctrine of papal infallibility was not defined until July 18, 1870. It was then defined in the Vatican Council. The decree reads: "This gift of truth and never-failing Faith was conferred by Heaven upon Peter and his successors in this chair, that they might perform their high office for the salvation of all; that the whole flock of Christ, kept away by them from the poisonous food of error, might be nourished with the pasture of Heavenly doctrine; that, the occasion of schism being removed, the whole Church might be kept one, and, resting on its foundation, might stand firm against the gates of hell.

"Therefore, faithfully adhering to the traditions received from the beginning of the Christian Faith, for the glory

of God our Saviour, the exaltation of the Catholic Religion, and the salvation of Christian people, the Sacred Council approving, we teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed; that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks ex-cathedra, that is, when in the discharge of the office of Pastor and Doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his Supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church, by the assistance promised him in blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which our Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that, therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church."

Christ had said to Peter: "And I say to thee: Thou art Peter, and upon

this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."[4] Christ founds upon Peter a Church which shall never be conquered by the powers of sin and error.

Christ said: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, but thou being converted confirm thy brethern."[5] St. Peter was to be the leader of the Apostles. He was to be the chief earthly representative of Christ Who said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."[6]

Nothing is more reasonable than the doctrine of infallibility. A Church without infallibility has as many creeds as it has members. It is but natural that it should be so. If human intellect alone is to be the standard of

[4] St. Matthew xvi, 18.
[5] St. Luke xxii, 31, 32.
[6] St. John xiv, 6.

deciding belief, then everyone may decide for himself. For everyone possesses intellect.

A Church that does not claim the prerogative of infallibility admits that it can teach error. If it admits that it can teach one single error even in the midst of a million truths it can no longer demand faith in its teaching. The adherent to its teachings could never know when that single error was being taught. He would, therefore, be forced to doubt all its teachings.

The Scriptures are filled with obscure passages. Disputes naturally arise amongst men who study any branch of knowledge. The experience of modern sects shows that this is especially true concerning the teachings of Christ. Without infallible authority in the Church, there would be no means of deciding disputed questions. Had it not been for the infallibility of the Church, the teachings of Faith would

long since have suffered the fate of Protestantism. They would have been torn and divided and denied until they could no longer be found upon earth.

No government can subsist without a supreme judicial court to pass final decision upon its laws. There is no appeal from the decrees of the supreme court. The government has vested all its power in this court. If the government possessed the prerogative of infallibility it would certainly bestow it upon its supreme judge.

Christ established a supreme court for the interpretation of His law upon earth. The pope is the supreme judge. The bishops of the world are his jurors. They assist him, but he decides the cases. Christ is as wise as men. He knows the vagaries of the human mind. He indeed possesses infinite wisdom. Hence, He could not have left His law and teaching without the

proper power and authority to safeguard them. Christ promised to ratify the decrees of His Church. He could not have done this if she were not to be infallible. "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth," He says to the Apostles, "shall be bound also in heaven and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven."[7]

[7] St. Matthew xviii, 18.

CHAPTER XII.

The Unity of the Church.

THERE is perfect unity in the Church of Christ.

In the Church there is unity of belief. All the faithful in every country of the earth and in every age believe one and the same doctrine. There is unity of authority. The children of every nation obey, with filial love and reverence, the voice of the chief pastor, the pope.

There is unity of organization. The Church is a divine organism. It is animated by the spirit of Christ. There is unity of practice. Throughout the whole world all Catholics are sanctified by the same seven Sacraments. Moreover, the form in which the Sacraments are administered is the same for all.

There is unity of prayer and sacrifice. Go where you will, you will hear those same beautiful prayers: you will see those same sublime ceremonies.

When the priest stands at the altar, you will witness the same holy Sacrifice. Whether it be in the heart of New Zealand, in the jungles of India, on the steppes of Russia, in the capitals of Europe or in the great metropolis of America, his every word, his every movement, his every vesture is the same. You will hear the tinkling of that same little consecration bell. You will see the people bowing down at that solemn moment of the Mass when our Eucharistic God is elevated before them. You will see them kneeling before the altar to receive their Lord and Saviour in Holy Communion. You will see that same priesthood. You will see the hand of the priest raised over the repentant sinner. You will see the priest anointing the

dying with the sacred oils. You will see that same cross enthroned upon the steeples of schools and churches. You will see the same fourteen stations of the cross, the same statues and pictures, the same tabernacle. Three times a day the Angelus bell sends forth its same holy message from every church tower on the face of the globe. Morning and evening three hundred millions of faithful souls kneel and offer up the same prayers to God. This is the unity of the Catholic Church.

Rome is the center of unity. Every bishop in the world is appointed by the pope at Rome. To Rome every bishop must report the work and condition of his diocese at regular, fixed intervals. From Rome are sent forth the decrees and decisions that govern the conduct and teaching of the humblest priest in the most remote hamlet of Christendom. To Rome flock count-

less thousands of pilgrims each year to pay homage to the successor of St. Peter.

In the schools and colleges of Rome nearly ten thousand clerical students sit side by side each day. They are the sons of every race and clime. Scores of languages are spoken amongst them. Yet they all understand the language spoken. It is Latin, the official language of the Church. What human mind could have conceived a unity so marvelous! It is only the Divine One that could have founded an institution endowed with such wondrous harmony and unity.

Not only does the Church teach the same doctrine in every part of the world, but she teaches the same doctrine in every age. It behooves all true Christians to be "careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one Spirit.

. . . One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all."[1]

The unity of teaching and government in the Church arises from the fact that she has preserved intact the deposit of Faith and teaching which she received from the Apostles. This she has been able to do by her infallible authority.

It is indeed a sublime thought to remember that three hundred millions of people throughout the world are united in our holy Faith. The world has never witnessed such unity in any other institution. The unity of ethnic religions in the East is merely a geographical union. There is no active belief. Those peoples simply grow up in their national traditions and superstitions as blades of grass grow up

[1] Epistle to the Ephesians iv, 3-6.

in a field. Theirs is a negative position. Theirs are passive religions.

The countless children of Mother Church are united in active Faith. One and all they accept a teaching that does not flatter human nature. It is easy to get followers in a cause that appeals to their vanity and their human inclinations. Tell them that their intellect is the norm of religious belief and you simply flatter their vanity.

Tell them also, that they may interpret the law of God to suit themselves. You appeal to their selfish pride. Tell them that they are subject to no religious authority and that they need not do penance. You satisfy the self-indulgence of poor, weak human nature.

The cross is the sign of the Catholic Faith. No human founder could ever have succeeded in gaining followers for such a faith. Were the Church a hu-

man institution it might have adopted the crescent or the crown for its symbol. The fundamental principles of Catholic Faith are obedience, self-denial and humility. Catholics have no choice of doctrines. To deny one single dogma of Faith is to be excluded from membership in the Church. The great German theologian, Doellinger, had rendered signal services to the Church. Yet when he refused to accept the doctrine of papal infallibility, he was excommunicated.

Intellectual pride is given no berth in the Catholic Church. Catholics must be obedient to their pastors in all that pertains to religion. They must kneel beside a mortal man and confess to him even their most secret sins. They must hold marraige indissoluble though all the outside world revels in divorce. They must bow down in the darkness of Gethsemane. They must stand in the shadow of Calvary's cross.

Thus the unity of hearts in Catholic Faith is a positive and an active union. It is not the union of driftwood upon the bosom of a flood. It is a union that all the powers of the world and the devil are ever striving to sever. It calls for a strong will and purpose. It demands courage, fortitude and conviction. It can not exist without devoted love for God, and without the divine aid that comes to man through fervent prayer and the Sacraments.

Christ Himself laid down the conditions by which alone we can be true followers of His. "Then Jesus said to his disciples: if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."[2] Thus St. Paul could say: "With Christ I am nailed to the cross."[3]

Christ willed that the children of His Church should be united in faith,

[2] St. Matthew xvi, 24.

[3] Epistle to the Galatians ii, 19.

in rule and in practice. He prays for unity in His Church. First He prays for His Apostles and then says: "And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me: That they all may be one, as thou Father, in me, and I in thee: that they also may be one in us."[4]

St. Paul calls the Church the mystical body of Christ. "For as the body is one, and hath many members: and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body, so also is Christ. For in one Spirit we are all baptized into One Body. . . . God hath tempered the body together. . . . That there might be no schism in the body. . . . Now you are the Body of Christ."[5]

St. Ireneus, who lived in the second century, beautifully describes the unity

[4] St. John xvii, 20, 21.
[5] I Epistle to the Corinthians xii, 12-27.

of the Church: "The Church, though spread over the whole world, to the earth's boundaries, having received, both from the Apostles and their disciples, the faith in one God, the Father Almighty . . . and in one Christ Jesus, that Son of God who was made flesh for our salvation, and in the Holy Spirit . . . having, as I have said, received that preaching and this faith, the Church, though spread over the whole world, guards (it) sedulously, as though dwelling in one house; and these truths she uniformly holds, as having but one soul, and one and the same heart; and these she proclaims and teaches, and hands down, uniformly, as though she had but one mouth. For though throughout the world the languages are various, still the force of the tradition is one and the same. And neither do the churches founded in Germany, nor those in Spain, in Gaul, in the East, in Egypt,

in Africa, nor in the regions in the middle of the earth, believe or deliver a different faith. Just as God's handiwork, the sun, is one and the same throughout the universe, so the preaching of the truth shines everywhere, and enlightens all men that wish to come to the knowledge of the truth. Nor does he who, amongst the rulers in the churches, is more powerful in word, deliver a different doctrine from the above (for no one is above his teacher); nor does he who is weak in speech weaken the tradition. For the faith being one and the same, neither he who has ability to say much concerning it, hath anything over, nor he who speaketh little, any lack. . . . The whole Church has one and the same faith throughout the whole world."[6]

The early Fathers were bitter against heresies. In the third century, St. Cyprian wrote: "Heresies and schisms are

[6] Adversus Haeres, l. 1, c. 10.

the devil's inventions, wherewith to subvert faith, to corrupt truth, and rend unity. . . . The Lord says to Peter: 'I say unto thee that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind,' etc.[7] And again, to the same, after His resurrection, He says, 'Feed my sheep.' Upon that one man He builds His Church. Which one Church, in the Canticle of Canticles, the Holy Spirit designates, in the person of Christ, and says, 'My dove, my spotless one, is but one; she is the only one of her mother, elect of her that bore her.'[8] He who holds not this unity of the Church, does he think that he holds the Faith? He who strives against and resists the Church, he

[7] St. Matthew xvi, 18.
[8] Canticle of Canticles vi, 8.

who abandons the chair of Peter, upon whom the Church was founded, does he feel confident that he is in the Church? Seeing that the blessed Apostle Paul also teaches this same thing, and shows the sacrament of unity in these words, 'One body and one Spirit: one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God.'[9]", [10]

If the Faith were not one throughout the world at all times, men might with reason reject it. They might, with all propriety, remain in a state of doubt or indifference. They could say to Christ on the Judgment day: "Your teaching was so uncertain and so varied that I did not know in what form to accept it. Hence, I did not profess it."

It is not enough that different creeds agree on "essentials." Everything revealed by Christ is essential to

[9] Epistle to the Ephesians iv, 4-6.
[10] De Unitate—Ecclesiae, tract 3, n. n. 3, 4.

the Christian. The teaching of Christ is decisive in every detail that pertains to Christian faith and life. The Church of Christ must teach the whole Truth and nothing else than the Truth. There is no authority on earth that can change or abolish the smallest detail of divine Truth. The Truth must exist in all ages and in all places.

It was the will of Christ that all His followers should be united in one Church: "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."[11]

St. Paul could say to the Christians of his day: "Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and

[11] St. John x, 16.

prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord. In whom you also are built together into an habitation of God in the Spirit."[12] He warns them against heresies and divisions: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema."[13]

And again He says: "Let no man seduce you, willing in humility, and religion of angels, walking in the things which he hath not seen, in vain puffed up by the sense of his flesh, and not holding the head, from which the whole body, by joints and bands being supplied with nourishment and compacted, groweth unto the increase of God."[14]

[12] Epistle to the Ephesians ii, 19-22.
[13] Epistle to the Galatians i, 8.
[14] Epistle to the Colossians ii, 18, 19.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Holiness of the Church

THE Church was instituted to sanctify men. Christ is her Divine Founder. He is the great model of sanctity for all humanity. The Church is holy. She was founded in holiness by Christ. She teaches a holy doctrine. She is holy in the lives of countless faithful members.

Alas, not all members of the Church lead holy lives. Many of those who have been nurtured in the bosom of Mother Church have been unfaithful to her teachings. The Church does not cast out the sinful and erring ones from her pale. She shows especial care and solicitude for sinners. She longs to bring them back to the path of virtue. She leaves the ninety-nine and

goes out after the sheep that was lost. Like her divine Founder, she can say: "I come not to call the just, but sinners to penance."[1]

There are, at times, great scandals in the Church. Those who fall from the highest places sink lowest into the mire. Yet the evil deeds of a few unfortunates do not taint the sanctity of Mother Church. Christ was as truly all-pure and all-holy after the treason of Judas as before.

"Christ also loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life. That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."[2]

It was the will of Christ that His Church should be the school of sanc-

[1] St. Luke v, 32.

[2] Epistle to the Ephesians v, 25-27.

tity and the home of pure love on earth. The Church is, as it were, Christ with us, living again in the flesh in every corner of the earth. The Church is the bearer of Christ's gifts to man, the dispenser of God's grace, the storehouse of Heaven's blessings to humanity.

The history of the Church bears a close analogy to the life of Christ. The Church started out in the humble persons of twelve poor fishermen. Christ was born in the obscurity and poverty of Bethlehem. The Church was hunted by cruel tyrants for three centuries. Unnumbered thousands were put to death in the hope of destroying the Church. Yet she escaped even as the child Jesus escaped from the cruel Herod. The holy martyrs gave their lives for her even as the holy Innocents of Bethlehem were sacrificed for the Infant Redeemer.

In her hidden life, the Church also

"grew in grace and wisdom."[3] During this early period the great Doctors and early Fathers wrote their sublime treatises on the divine teachings of the Church. They were nearly all great saints. It was the age of such men as St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine. The Church was nurtured in its infancy by great saints. How gladly a St. Polycarp and a St. Ignatius laid down their lives for the Faith. How joyfully nearly all the popes of the first three centuries, and a countless number of other noble Christians suffered martyrdom for the Faith. The Christ-Child, too, was during His infancy and childhood cared for by those two greatest saints, Mary and Joseph.

Christ in His public ministry showed special love for the poor, the afflicted and for sinners. Even so the Church throughout her whole history has been

[3] St. Luke ii, 52.

the mother of the poor and the orphan, the nurse of the sick and afflicted and the hope and friend of sinners.

Christ it was Who first proclaimed the law of love to the world. He charged His Church to promulgate this sublime law. The world had never dreamed that it could hear those words: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[4]

The teachings of holy Church bear all the beauty and grandeur that an omnipotent God could give them.

Whatever there is in the world that is highest and most ennobling has come through the teachings of Mother Church. Whatever of good may be found in other religions is but a reflected light from the splendor of Catholic teachings. Many opponents of the Church today would be still sunken in barbarism were it not that

[4] St. Matthew xxii, 39.

the Church long ago civilized their savage ancestors.

Often Christians of modern sects expend their best efforts in trying to convict Mother Church of evil. The words of St. Augustine to the Donatists might well be addressed to them: "If the Church should address you gently, and say: Oh my children, what complaint do you bring against your mother? I wish now to hear from you why you have deserted me. You accuse your brethren, and I am sorely lacerated. When the Gentiles persecuted me, I endured many things in grief; many abandoned me, but they did it through fear; but no one has compelled you to rebel against me thus. You say that you are with me, but you see that it is false. I am called the Catholic Church, and you are on the side of the Donatists."[5]

The lives of the saints are the most

[5] Psalm, Contra p. Don T. 9, C. 31.

beautiful fruit of the Church. The saints are the greatest glory of humanity. It thrills the very soul to read the annals of these holy men and women. They are found in every age and in every station of life. Holy Church venerates kings and slaves side by side upon her altars.

The saints are great, heroic souls who practiced, in an eminent degree, the virtues taught by Holy Church. They were sanctified through the grace of her Sacraments. Poetry and art have not been able to depict characters so sublime as the saints of the Church. Fiction can not produce narratives so touchingly beautiful as the story of their lives. "If the first fruit be holy, so is the lump also; and if the root be holy, so are the branches."[6]

There are no saints outside the Catholic Church. We can not conceive a Protestant saint, an atheist saint,

[6] Epistle to the Romans xi, 16.

or an infidel saint. Unfortunately, the sects are dead branches that have long since been cut off from the parent stem. They no longer bear fruit.

The Church is filled with thousands upon thousands of hidden saints. In every city, in every village and hamlet, there are holy persons quietly living lives of great sancity. The lives of all faithful Catholics are holy. Go into the churches of our cities early in the morning and there you will find rich and poor in large numbers kneeling at Mass. Many in almost every parish receive Holy Communion each day. Every day many priests sit long hours in the confessional administering the Sacrament of Penance to the faithful.

God alone knows the labors of priests. Day by day, they go about ministering to their flock. Each morning the day is begun by offering the Holy Sacrifice. They are the "dis-

pensers of the mysteries of God."[7] They give out those good things which holy Mother Church keeps in store for her children. The little ones are brought to be regenerated in the waters of Baptism. And when they grow up to the use of reason they are taught the truths of Faith. Then they are led to the altar to receive their Eucharistic God.

Before that same altar they stand and in the presence of God to plight their troth in holy wedlock. Through the Sacrament of Matrimony, they receive the grace to fulfil the sacred duties of marriage and parenthood. And when the end draws near, they are fortified for their journey into eternity by the last Sacraments. Day and night, the priest is waiting to bear their God to their bedside of pain. God will be their Viaticum, their soul-food on the way.

[7] I Epistle to the Corinthians iv, 1.

The Holy Oils of Extreme Unction are then put upon their senses to strengthen them for their last struggle with the powers of darkness. At the side of the grave stands the priest to bless that lifeless body that has been sanctified so often by the Body and Blood of Christ. These are the means of sanctity that Holy Church bestows upon her children.

But the prayers of the faithful, that never-ceasing chorus of supplication—who can contemplate its power for sanctity! Millions of hearts are united in prayer each day. Then, there is that other multitude of the faithful in Purgatory. There is also that countless chorus in Heaven. Those bands outnumber a thousand times the millions on earth. They are still united in love with their brethren. Their prayers ascend continuously to the Eternal Throne for them.

There is also that innumerable choir

of virgins in every part of the globe, the Sisterhoods. Their name is legion. They have left their homes and all that were dear to them. They have hidden even their names from the world. They have consecrated their lives to God by the three vows of Chastity, Poverty and Obedience. Their lives are personified unselfish love. They teach the little ones. They are mothers to the orphans. They are devoted daughters to the aged and decrepit. They soothe the pillow of the sick. They stoop down and embrace fallen womanhood. They gather in the poor unfortunates, care for them, love them, save them.

Like Mary others sit at the feet of Jesus. They lead the contemplative life.

Well might the Church use Christ's words to the disciples of St. John the Baptist. "Go relate what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the

lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead (in sin) rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them."[8]

The Church is loved by all who know her, and hated by all who know her not. To her may well be applied those words of holy Job: "The ear that heard me, blessed me, and the eye that saw me gave witness to me: Because I delivered the poor man that cried out: and the fatherless, that had no helper, the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I comforted the heart of the widow . . . I was an eye to the blind, and a foot to the lame. I was the father of the poor."[9]

[8] St. Matthew xi, 4, 5.
[9] Job xxix, 11-16.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Universality of the Church

THE Catholic Church is spread over the whole world. It has planted the cross of Christ in the midst of every people on the face of the globe. Catholicism is a world religion. Mother Church knows no distinction of color or race. Her love for humanity is as broad as the love of her divine Founder. He died for the salvation of all men in all ages. She labors in His name for the salvation of the whole human race in every age. She has never ceased to fulfil that divine commission imposed upon her by Christ: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature."[1] "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations."[2]

[1] St. Mark xvi, 15.
[2] St. Matthew xxviii, 19.

The Church is called Catholic by friend and foe. No one has ever been able to deny her this title bestowed upon her in Apostolic times. Men have designated her as the "papist" church or the "Romish" church. Yet if you point to a Catholic church and ask one of these same men what church it is, he will, invariably, tell you it is a Catholic church. Unwittingly, they recognize the universality of the Catholic Church.

No other church has ever been able to assume the name of Catholic. They have, at times, attempted to combine the word with other words in the title of their churches. But their titles have always betrayed their provincial character. Ask them whether a member of their "American Catholic Church" or their "English Catholic Church" or the "Old Catholic Church" is Protestant or Catholic. They will

immediately tell you that he is a Protestant.

There are certain things that Christ seems to have decreed that the sects can not use in their churches.

Some Protestant churches have put the cross on their steeples. They have placed statues of the Blessed Virgin upon their altars. Professedly, however, in this they are imitating the Catholic Church. They boast that their worship is similar to that of the Catholic Church.

The Church is sometimes called the Roman Catholic Church or simply the Roman Church. But to the Church alone belongs the glorious title of Catholic. It is her proper and distinctive name. She alone is all that this name implies. She is spread over the whole world. She teaches all nations. She exists in all ages. The Church is Catholic in every sense of the word. The title Catholic can not

be applied to any religious sect. Christ gave His Church a Catholic mission. He sent her into the whole world. He told her to teach all nations. He told her to continue this great work unto the end of time.

The Church has been called Catholic since the earliest times. St. Pacian, writing in the fourth century, says: "But under the Apostles, you will say, no one was called a Catholic. Grant this to have been the fact, or suppose it to have been so. When heresies, after the Apostles' days, arose, and under divers names strove to tear and scatter piecemeal the dove of God, and His queen, did not the Apostolic people require a peculiar name whereby to distinguish the unity of the people that had not been corrupted? . . . Suppose I entered this very day, into a populous city, and found there Marcionites, Apollinarists, Cataphigians, Novatians, and others of the sort, all

calling themselves Christians; by what name should I be able to recognize the congregation of my own people, were it not from its being called Catholic? . . . . Come, tell me, who bestowed so many names on the other peoples? Why have so many cities, so many nations, each their own description? Will the very man who calls in question the name Catholic be ignorant of the cause of his own name, if I shall require its origin? Whence was it delivered to me? Assuredly, that which has stood so many ages was not borrowed from man. This name Catholic sounds not of Marcion, nor of Apelles, nor of Montanus, nor does it take heretics as its author. Many things the Holy Spirit hath taught us, whom God sent from Heaven to the Apostles as their Comforter and Guide. . . . And yet, my brother, fret not yourself: Christian is my name, but Catholic is my surname. The

former names me, the latter describes me."[3]

If St. Pacian were to come into a populous city today, he would find a longer list of sects. He might well say: "Come, tell me who bestowed so many names; Lutherans, Calvinists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Campbellites, Baptists, and the like, on the other peoples?"

The Psalmist foretold that the teaching of the Apostles would spread over the whole world. St. Paul quotes this prophecy: "Faith cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of Christ. But I say to you: Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world."[4]

The whole world was the field of labor given to the Apostles. A quarter

[3] Epistle 1, n. 2-4, Migne P. L. tom. 13.
[4] Epistle to the Romans x, 18—Psalm xviii, 5.

of a century after Christ had sent forth the Apostles, St. Paul wrote: "I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ, for you all, because your faith is spoken of in the whole world."[5]

A century later, St. Justin declared: "There is no race of men, whether of barbarians or of Greeks, or, in fine, bearing any other name, whether because they live in wagons, or without a fixed habitation, or dwell in tents leading a pastoral life—among whom prayers and eucharists are not offered to the Father and Maker of the universe through the name of the crucified Jesus."[6]

The Church is universal in her teachings. She teaches the whole deposit of Faith that was handed down by the Apostles. Many enemies have attempted to prove that the Church teaches more than Christ and the

[5] Epistle to the Romans i, 8.
[6] Dial. cum Tryphone, n. 77.

Apostles taught. Yet no one has ever accused the Church of teaching less than they taught.

It is curious to note that the Church is always accused of excess, never of omission. It is a notorious fact that the sects have generally started out with a long profession of faith. With time their list of tenets ever grows shorter. Before the demise of a sect their doctrines usually have all disappeared.

Not even our worst enemy has ever maintained that the Church has abandoned any tenet of faith taught in a bygone age. Indeed, the Church is continually defining and reasserting doctrines that are called into question by heretics. Weeds grow up spontaneously, but their vigor is not improved by cultivation. Truth seems to grow stronger with age; the more it is unfolded the more healthful it becomes.

Error gradually fades away when it is brought to the clear light of day.

The Church is universal in her charity. She has caught the message from the Master and borne it down through the ages: "Love your enemies; do good to those that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you."[7] The Church opens the doors of her hospitals and other charitable institutions to the poor of every creed. She teaches her children to show the same love and kindness to friend and to foe.

The universal brotherhood of man is found in the bosom of the Catholic Church alone. She makes no distinction between rich and poor, between high and low. Her laws and her doctrines are the same for all minds and classes. She teaches the same truth to kings as to slaves. She binds both by the same precepts. She has no

[7] St. Matthew v, 44.

chosen places for the rich and powerful in her churches.

Nowhere else on the face of the earth are class distinctions so completely disregarded as in the Catholic Church. Before the Catholic altar kneel, side by side, master and servant, the scholar and the unlettered, the millionaire and the pauper. In that moment at the altar, at least, all are equal, all are brothers. For they all receive the same God into their breast.

CHAPTER XV.

The Perpetuity of the Church

THE Church will last to the end of the world. Throughout all the ages it will last as it has been since it came from the hand of Christ. The Church has been assailed by the fiercest foes from the beginning. Christ Himself foretold that it would be so: "If they have persecuted me they will also persecute you."[1] The powers of hell have been let loose against it. Yet Christ has said: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."[2]

The Church can not fail. Its mission is to extend to the end of the world. Christ has promised to be with it to the end. "Behold," He says, "I am

[1] St. John xv, 20.
[2] St. Matthew xvi, 18.

with you all days even to the consummation of the world."[3] The Church can not be overthrown. For Christ built it upon a rock: "Upon this rock I will build my church."[4]

The Church is destined to battle ceaselessly against a twofold foe. Unbelievers attack it from without and heresies arise from within. Faithless members of the Church often strive to betray her with the kiss of Judas. "In a great house," says St. Paul, "there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some indeed unto honor, but some unto dishonor."[5]

There are indeed those in the Church who grow presumptious. In their pride they sometimes rebel and set forth to preach a new doctrine. Yet they do not destroy the Church. They

[3] St. Matthew xxviii, 20.
[4] St. Matthew xvi, 18.
[5] II Epistle to Timothy ii, 20.

destroy themselves. "What if some of them have not believed? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid."[6]

Heresies sprung up early in the Church's history. There are hundreds of heresies at the present time. Even in the third century, St. Cyprian could say: "Let no one imagine that good men can leave the Church. The wind carries not away wheat, nor does the storm overthrow the tree that has a solid root to rest on. It is the empty straw that the tempest tosses, the unhealthy tree that the blow of the whirlwind casts down. These the Apostle John abominates and smites saying: 'They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us.'"[7][8]

[6] Epistle to the Romans iii, 3.
[7] I St. John ii, 19. [8] De Unitate, n. 9.

It is the custom of those who leave the Church to say that the Church has become corrupted or that it has perished. This has been the strong argument of heretics from the beginning. St. Augustine answers those who made this assertion in the fifth century: "There are some who say: 'She, that was the Church of all nations, is already no more; she has perished.' This they say who are not in her. The imprudent assertion! Is she no more, because thou art not in her? See to it lest thou, for that cause, be no more: for she will be, though thou be not. This assertion, abominable, detestable, full of presumption and falsehood, upheld by no truth, without one spark of wisdom, devoid of all wit, vain, rash, hasty, pernicious, the Spirit of God foresaw. . . . And He declared nor was this word vain. . . . Behold, I am with you even to the consummation of the world:

Therefore even to the end of the world is the Church in all nations."[9]

The Church can never decay or become decrepit. She enjoys the gift of perpetual youth. "There is nothing equal to the Church," says St. John Chrysostom. "Tell me not of walls and arms: for walls grow old with time; but the Church never grows old; walls barbarians destroy, but the Church not even demons can overcome. And that my words are not empty boasting facts testify. How many have waged war against the Church, and they that warred have perished! But she has been raised above the heavens. Such is the mightiness of the Church; warred against, she conquers; devised against, she overcomes; assailed with insult, she is made more resplendent; she receives wounds, but sinks not beneath the ulcer; agitated by waves, she is

[9] In Psalm ci, n. 8, 9.

not submerged; tempest-tossed, she suffers no shipwreck."[10]

The Church has the power of endurance from her divine Founder. Christ will not allow His Church to be destroyed. The same St. John Chrysostom says: "Nothing, O man, is more powerful than the Church. Give up the conflict with her if thou wouldst not have thy power destroyed; wage not war against Heaven. If thou war against man, thou wilt either conquer or be conquered; but if thou war against the Church it is impossible for thee to conquer; for God is stronger than all men. . . . The Church is stronger than Heaven. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away.'[11] What words! 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.'[12]

[10] De Capto Eutropio, n. i, Migne P. G. t. 52, c. 397.
[11] St. Matthew xxiv, 35. [12] St. Matthew xvi, 18.

'If thou believe not the word, believe he facts. How many tyrants would ain have overcome the Church? . . And they prevailed not. Where are hose that warred against her? They re unnamed; they are buried in oblivon. But where is the Church? She hines brighter than the sun. They re quenched; she is immortal."[13]

The Church has always been the reat promoter of intellectual progress. Many of the world's greatest scholars re her most valiant champions. She erself is the mother and patron of earning. She does not fear the rise of ew philosophy; truth is divine. Learnng and science may run their course. They may delve into the deepest reesses of human knowledge. Then they vill return and, sitting at the feet of Mother Church, they will say: "Teach ne to know the truth."

Nor can material progress interfere

[13] Migne P. G. Tom. 52, col. 429.

with the well-being of Mother Church. In the early days, her missionaries toiled across continents on foot. Now they travel by limited express. When vogue was, they visited their flock by ox team. Now they are able to cover much more ground by the automobile. A short time ago the newspapers related how a priest had been brought to a dying French soldier by aeroplane. Let progress come. The Church will use every new invention to carry on her mission. She will make all material progress serve to further the true progress of faith in Jesus Christ.

There is indeed a human element in the Church. Popes, bishops, priests and people are all human beings. The Church is a society of mortal men. Christ conveys His grace and His teaching to man through man. No matter how high a dignity a man attains in the Church, he never lays aside his human nature.

Enemies of the Church point to history. They describe dire corruption in the lives of many great churchmen. Upon this supposed historical fact they base their assertion that the Church fell into error. Even though all their accusations were true, it would prove nothing against the Church. It would simply prove that a certain number of individuals were untrue to the moral teachings of the Church.

As a divine institution the Church does not depend upon the genius nor sanctity of any particular individual for its power and authority. No human malice or ignorance could ever drag the Church of Christ into error. If the Church could fall into error Christ Himself would be in error. For He promised to remain with His Church unto the end of the world.

The religious upheaval of the sixteenth century was dogmatic rather than moral. The so-called reformers

accused the Church of immorality. Yet their innovations were almost entirely dogmatic. The first work of Protestantism was to reject the dogmatic teachings of the Catholic Church. They held that the Church established by Christ was no longer reliable. They deserted it to swear allegiance to a church established by mortal men. If the Church of Christ teaches error, will the church of Luther proclaim the truth? Or, perhaps, they say that the Church is merely an invisible union of hearts. Yet they do not hold that Protestantism is invisible.

The rejection of Christ's Church by so many Christians is the work of feeling and passion. It is the sin of proud and sensual teachers as was the rejection of Christ Himself. The flame of prejudice is kept ablaze in the hearts of sincere people by the untiring efforts of hirelings. Prejudice and hatred are, perhaps, the only sentiments in the

human heart that are as strong as love.

Men naturally love true religion. Prejudice and hatred then must supply the passion of love in those who do not possess the true Faith. False religions have ever been cruel persecutors from the beginning of the world.

Truth is tolerant from its very nature. Error can only exist by tearing down truth. Truth stands on its own basis. It has an existence of its own. But error can only exist on the foundation that was built for truth. It is for this reason that those who spread error, in our day, print their vile sheets and volumes and deliver their shameful lectures against the Church.

Libraries have been written on the Inquisition, St. Bartholomew's massacre, and Bloody Mary's reign. Yet the Church has never sanctioned the unjust shedding of one drop of blood. Nor has she ever been so tyrannical as to cause even one injustice to the

lowliest of mortals. It was Christ Himself Who shaped the policy of His Church. That memorable night in the shadows of Gethsemane He said: "Put up again thy sword into its place, for all that take the sword shall perish with the sword."[14]

The Church has been persecuted in every age since the days when St. Stephen was stoned in Jerusalem. For three centuries the faithful of Rome crouched like hunted beasts in the catacombs. Multiplied thousands have died the martyr's death. All the devices that human genius and malice could contrive have been hurled against the buttresses of the Church. Philosophy, science, and history have been distorted. They have been cultivated with the zeal of fury in order to overthrow the power of the Church. The wealth of nations and the might of great kingdoms have been expended

[14] St. Matthew xxvi, 52.

to suppress and exterminate the faithful followers of Holy Church.

It is the fulfilment of Christ's words to His Apostles: "Remember my word that I said to you: The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me they will also persecute you."[15] "They will deliver you up in councils . . . you shall be brought before governors, and before kings for my sake . . . you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake."[16] "You shall be hated by all nations for my name's sake."[17] It would almost seem that Christ were here referring to the France, Portugal and Italy of today. "If they have called the goodman of the house Beelzebub," says Christ, "how much more them of the household?"[18] It is not strange, then, that bishops and priests

[15] St. John xv, 20.
[16] St. Matthew x, 17-23.
[17] St. Matthew xxiv, 9.
[18] St. Matthew x, 25.

should be described, even today, as evil men in league with the devil.

It is Christ Himself Who comforts us when we see bitter calumnies spread broadcast against the Church: "Blessed are ye," He says, "when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."[19]

In spite of all opposition, the Church proceeds sublimely on her way, fulfilling her divine mission. New sects rise and flourish for a time and then disappear. But the Church of Christ goes on forever. She sees the rise and fall of nations and dynasties. She is two thousand years old, yet she is filled with youthful vigor. Unchanged, she gazes upon changing human society. She is as powerful in the new age as she was in the old. She embraces

[19] St. Matthew v, 11, 12.

all nations of earth in her bosom. She flourishes in the time of trial and celebrates her victory in the hour of her enemies' triumph.

The Church of Christ is divine, and because she is divine, she can not die. If we look back across nineteen centuries, we marvel at the struggles she has endured. Peaceful, calm, dignified, sublime, silently she proceeds on her way.

Peter's little boat has become a great modern steamship. It is only the swelling of the sea that makes her sway back and forth in her course. The angry waves of human passion beat upon her only to fall back upon themselves after their fury has been spent. Her voyage is long, extending to the end of time. Though the world exist a million years, she will proceed majestically to the end. She is sailing the vast ocean of time. Her port is Eternity.

CHAPTER XVI.

Salvation in the Church Alone.

IT IS Christ's will that all men should be members of His Church. He gave His divine teaching and the means of salvation into the sole custody of His Church. "Go ye into the whole world," He says, "and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned."[1] Hence, no one can be saved who, knowingly and willingly, refuses to enter the true Church of Christ.

It is not enough to receive Baptism and to believe in Christ. True faith in Christ implies more than a mere persuasion. It implies the works of

[1] St. Mark xvi, 15.

faith. Says Christ: "Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."[2]

It is not enough to have a mere sentiment of faith. We must obey the law of Christ. We must do the works commanded by Christ's Church. "Thou believest that there is one God," says St. James, "Thou dost well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without good works is dead? . . . Do you see that by works a man is justified: and not by faith only?"[3]

Christ sent His Apostles with authority to teach. His Church was to be the living ministry of His Word until the end of the world.

[2] St. Matthew vii, 21.

[3] Epistle of St. James ii, 19-24.

Christ in the most emphatic terms tells all men that they must obey the authority of His Church. For He says: "He that will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and publican."[4] Those who refuse to accept the teachings of the Church are to be considered as unbelievers.

Immediately after making this statement, Jesus tells His Apostles that their decisions will be ratified in Heaven: "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."[5] This He said to signify that His Church would be endowed with divine authority.

Again Christ said to His Apostles: "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me."[6] He that heareth the one Cath-

[4] St. Matthew xviii, 17. [5] St. Matthew xviii, 18.
[6] St. Luke x, 16.

olic, apostolic Church, then, heareth Christ. He that despiseth the one true Church that has come down from the Apostles despiseth Christ.

The Apostle tells us how Christ founded His Church to protect His people against false teachings: "He gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: until we all meet in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ: that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive."[7]

Back in the second century, St.

[7] Epistle to the Ephesians iv, 11-14.

Ireneus wrote concerning this passage of Holy Writ: "For in the Church, saith he, God hath placed Apostles, prophets, doctors, and every other work of the Spirit, of which all they are not partakers who do not hasten to the Church, but by their evil sentiment and most flagrant conduct, deprive themselves of life.

"For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and every grace: but the Spirit is truth. Wherefore they who do not partake of that (Spirit), are neither nourished unto life from a mother's breasts, nor see the most clear spring that proceeds from Christ's body; but dig unto themselves broken cisterns out of earthy trenches, and out of the filth drink foul water, fleeing from the faith of the Church, lest they be brought back, but rejecting the Spirit that they may not be instructed. But

being alienated from the truth, they deservedly wallow in every error, tossed about by it; at intervals thinking one thing and then another respecting the same matters, and never having a settled opinion: preferring to be cavilers about words, rather than disciples of the truth.

"For they are not based upon the one rock, but upon sand. . . . They have always as an excuse that they are seeking (for they are blind), but they never find. . . . But he (God) will judge those that are out of the truth, that is, who are out of the Church."[8]

It was in such strong terms as these that the early Fathers spoke about heretics. In the most forcible language they condemned those who cut themselves off from the one true Church of Christ. The leaders of sects are the same in all ages. Ter-

[8] Adv. Haereses, liber iii, c. 24, n. 1, 2. and lib. iv, c. 33, n. 3.

tullian says of them: "Their work comes not of the building of their own but from the pulling down of the truth. They undermine ours, that they may build their own . . . but they know no reverence even toward their own chiefs. . . . Finally, all heresies are found, when closely examined, to differ in many things from their own founders."[9]

The Church is ever kind and loving toward those who have strayed away. She feels only pity for those who do not enjoy the blessings of Faith. She never ceases to pray for them that they may return to the true fold of Christ. Even in the third century, St. Cyprian wrote: "This is and ought to be our special study, to seek to secure, as far as in us lies, the unity delivered by the Lord, and through the Apostles to us (their) successors: and as far as we are able, to gather

[9] De Praescript xlii.

back into the Church the straying and wandering sheep which the perverse wit and heretical efforts of certain persons have separated from the mother . . . men who will have to give an account to God of the rupture and separation caused by them, and of their abandonment of the Church."[10]

The same saint says again: "Neither shall he come unto the rewards of Christ who leaves the Church of Christ. He is an alien; he is profane; he is an enemy. He can no longer have God for a father, who has not the Church for a mother. If anyone was able to escape who was without the ark of Noah, then can he escape who is out of the Church.

"The Lord warns and says, 'He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth.'[11] He who breaks the peace

[10] Epistola xlii ad Cornelium, p. 128.

[11] St. Luke xi, 23.

and concord of Christ's Church, does so against Christ. He who gathers elsewhere than in the Church, scatters the Church of Christ. . . . Neither let certain persons deceive themselves by a vain interpretation, in that the Lord has said, 'Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, I am with them.'[12]

"Corrupters of the Gospel, and false interpreters, they lay down what follows, and omit what goes before: giving heed to part, while part they deceitfully suppress. 'If,' saith he, 'two of you shall agree together on earth.' He places agreement first. . . . Yet how can he be at agreement with another who is at disagreement with the Church itself and with the universal brotherhood? . . .

"He who instituted and made the Church does not divide men from the Church, but rebuking the faithless

[12] St. Matthew xviii, 20.

with their discord, and by His voice commending peace to the faithful, He shows that He is rather with two or three who pray with one mind, than with many persons who are in dissent. . . . They can not dwell with God who refuse to be of one mind in God's Church."[13]

The bitterness and invective of the early Fathers is expended on those who deceive men and keep them out of the Church. They show only tenderness for those sincere people who, through false teachers, are deprived of those great graces and blessings that Christ has sent them through His Church.

In all ages some have sought excuses for leaving the Church because of scandals within her. Eusebius, early in the fourth century, addresses such as they: "Do not separate from the Church. If I am mad, what is that

[13] De Unitate, Ecclesiae, n. n. 6-14.

to thee? If I utter things that are alien, judge me, and lose me not.

"Seek not an opportunity for schisms. A sheep which is without the Church is the wolf's share. For be thou even a sheep of greater strength, it is more expedient for thee to be within than without the walls of the fold. Thou art strong; bear with my weakness: thou art infirm; accept a cure from the common Church.

"One drop does not make a torrent: even though it fall it is absorbed by the earth—yea, even before it reach it: but drop upon drop overturns mountains. One reed is easily broken, but many are stronger than iron. The eye itself is not an eye. . . . It is the blending of the members together that makes a whole that is excellent. For wert thou an eye taken from the body, thou wert blind, or rather dead.

"Let us come together in the Church

under a mother's wings, in the Church where the adornments are those of a bride, and the members are Christ's, and not for the purpose of schisms or of heresies. . . . This house is not mine or thine. Why withdraw on my account from the Lord's house?"[14]

The Church has never taught that no one can be saved outside her fold. Those who are in good faith without the Church can be saved. They are, however, deprived of nearly all the ordinary means of grace.

Those who pray sincerely for the light of Faith generally come to enter the Church. There are sincere souls without the Church. They are striving to do God's will to the best of their knowledge. They are said to belong to the soul of the Church. They are not in corporate union with the Church. Yet they have the spirit of Christ. They are sincerely seeking the Truth and

[14] Lib II, De Fide adv. Sabell.

doing all that they know to serve God.

It is almost impossible for anyone to rest secure in error. He will generally have doubts. The Catholic may have difficulties in his Faith. But he can never doubt its truth unless through gross ignorance of its teachings.

There are many who are prepared to "deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Christ." They may have never been taught to pray. They may mistakenly look upon Faith as a matter of mere human reason. Thus they may be neglecting that all-important duty of praying to God for the gift of divine Faith. Their unbelief may thus be for them a misfortune rather than a sin.

Our charity bids us believe that the vast multitude of non-Catholics are sincere. It is hard for reason to admit that men would willfully deprive themselves of eternal salvation. There are those who have never had the oppor-

tunity of knowing the truth about the Catholic Church. The greatest number, perhaps, are those who are blinded by the calumnies of those in whom they trust as their spiritual guides.

These false guides are the Pharisees who induce the people to crucify Christ's Church. They have sold their birthright for a pot of porridge. Their bread and butter often depend upon their ability to calumniate the Catholic Church. Had it not been for the "sanctified" Pharisees, the common people would have continued to cry out "hosannas" to Christ.

Indeed paid calumniators preach hatred against the Catholic Church today. Otherwise all that believe in Christ would hail the Church as their mother. These same modern Pharisees have caused the divisions in Christianity. Were it not for this, the whole civilized world would, doubtless, be Christian today. It is the dissentions

amongst Christians that keep thinking men out of the Church.

Every stream of knowledge and literature has been poisoned against the Church. Books and periodicals are filled with bias. It is taught in the schools. It is discussed in the streets. All men are naturally credulous. There is a certain childlike simplicity in human nature.

Children are easily frightened at bogie stories. They never suspect their elders of deceit, no matter how impossible the story.

May God have pity on those who spend their lives in the work of maligning the Church of Christ. They pervert the meaning of her good deeds. They put a false construction on her most sublime teachings. They attribute her marvelous works to the power of the devil.

Christ was accused of being in league with Beelzebub. Those who

consecrate their lives to God and His afflicted ones, they declare, break the law of God. For they say celibacy is contrary to God's command. Just so the Pharisees accused Christ of breaking the Sabbath when He cured the paralytic. They feared the people would believe in Him.

"The spouse of Christ can not become adulterate," says St. Cyprian; "she is undefiled and chaste. . . . She keeps us for God: she appoints unto the kingdom the sons she has borne. Whosoever has separated from the Church, is joined to an adulteress; he is cut off from the promises of the Church. Neither shall he come unto the rewards of Christ who leaves the Church of Christ. He is an alien; he is an outcast; he is an enemy. He can no longer have God for a father, who has not the church for a mother."[15]

"The question between us, undoubt-

[15] De Unitate, Ecclesiae, n. 6.

edly, is," says St. Augustine, "where is the Church? . . . That Church is assuredly one, which our ancestors called the Catholic. . . . But this Church is the body of Christ, as the Apostle says, 'For His body, which is the Church.'[16] Whence, assuredly, it is manifest, that he who is not in the members of Christ can not have Christian salvation."[17]

It is often pointed out that there are good men who do not belong to the Church. Sometimes those who are not affiliated with the Church lead even better lives than those who have been nurtured in the Church. Yet this fact creates no difficulty.

It is, nevertheless, true that all are bound to become members of Christ's Church. Even those who do not profess the Faith have received their Christian virtue through the ministry

[16] Epistle to the Colossians i, 24.

[17] De Unitate, Ecclesiae Contra Donatistas n. 2.

of the Church. Had it not been for the Church, they could not have been better than pagans or barbarians. They enjoy the Christian traditions of their forefathers who were trained in Christian virtue by the Church. Basking in the sunlight of the Church's blessings to mankind, they assert that they do not need the Church. Had the Church not taught their ancestors they would not be enjoying the blessings of civilization today.

Many men possess mere natural religion. It is the religious sentiment implanted in man's heart at creation. It impels him to recognize the existence of God and to show certain marks of honor and honesty toward his fellow man. It was intended to prepare men to accept the fullness of Revealed Religion. It was not intended to supply the norms and principles according to which we are to serve God.

Men who are indifferent toward the

Church are those of whom Christ said: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth."[18] If men are virtuous outside the Church, they are like orphan children trained by strangers. They know not the care and solicitude of a loving mother. They are like beggars who eat the crumbs that fall, whilst there awaits them a place at the Master's table.

Their little ones are often left without the cleansing waters of Baptism. They do not know the joy of the sinner who has knelt in the confessional and heard the blessed words of absolution. They have never dreamed of the peaceful consolation that glows in the heart of the faithful soul who clasps his Eucharistic God in his bosom. They never suspect the sublime sentiments that fill the hearts of those who kneel before the Catholic altar.

[18] Apocalypse iii, 16.

Nor has it ever entered into their minds that the God of Calvary is there reproducing that divine sacrifice on that altar.

They could never guess that those who kneel devoutly at Holy Mass are, in effect, kneeling at the foot of the cross on which hangs the Saviour of the world. They are strangers to our God who dwells in our tabernacles. They have not learned that the Divine One has outdone the humility of Bethlehem on countless altars throughout the world.

Poor brothers of ours! How pitiful are their deathbed scenes. There is nothing but human words to comfort the soul that is about to set out for eternity. No priest comes to administer the last Sacraments. There is no absolution, no Extreme Unction, no Holy Viaticum for the dying loved one. No priestly hand is raised to bless the lifeless body that was the abode of so

much love. It is lowered silently into an unblessed grave.

The bonds of love are severed for them. They do not know that they can continue to show love and affection toward their dear departed by praying for his soul. For they do not believe in the "communion of saints." These and countless other blessings are lost to our separated brethren. Their lives indeed are empty and desolate at best. There is always a void in their hearts. It is not strange that so many of them sink into despair and a suicide's grave.

To be indifferent toward the truth is not to be in good faith. Many are in bad faith because they knowingly remain in doubt. Many are in bad faith because they do not seek to find Christ's true Church. Many are in bad faith because they do not pray earnestly to God for the gift of Faith. Many are in bad faith because their

minds are proud, and they will not bow down in humility to God. "He hath loved the people; all the saints are in his hand: and they that approach to his feet, shall receive of his doctrine."[19]

Many indeed fail to enter the Church through lack of courage. Every human consideration, perhaps, deters them. Friends, relations and all that is dear to them are often the price they must pay for the Faith. Sometimes they foresee loss of social and financial position. Christ knew their weakness when He said: "Amen, I say to you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive much more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."[20]

[19] Deuteronomy xxxiii, 3.
[20] St. Luke xviii, 29, 30.

No one ever loses his friends when he joins one of the sects. Such a one is never cast out from the bosom of his own family. Not so with those who enter the Catholic Church. When the great Newman, afterwards Cardinal, entered the Church, not only many of his friends, but his own loved ones abandoned him.

Each year many thousands of souls find peace in the bosom of the Catholic Church. They find that peace which the world can not give. It would be strange indeed if it were the same whether we belong to Christ's Church or whether we belong to some other Church. It were strange indeed if it were as good to reject Christ's Church as to listen to its teachings. When the Apostles went forth to preach, Christ said to them: "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your

words: going forth out of that house or city shake off the dust from your feet. Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city."[21]

[21] St. Matthew x, 14, 15.

238
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MACEACHEN, RODERICK

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